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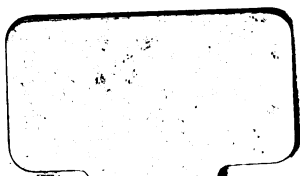
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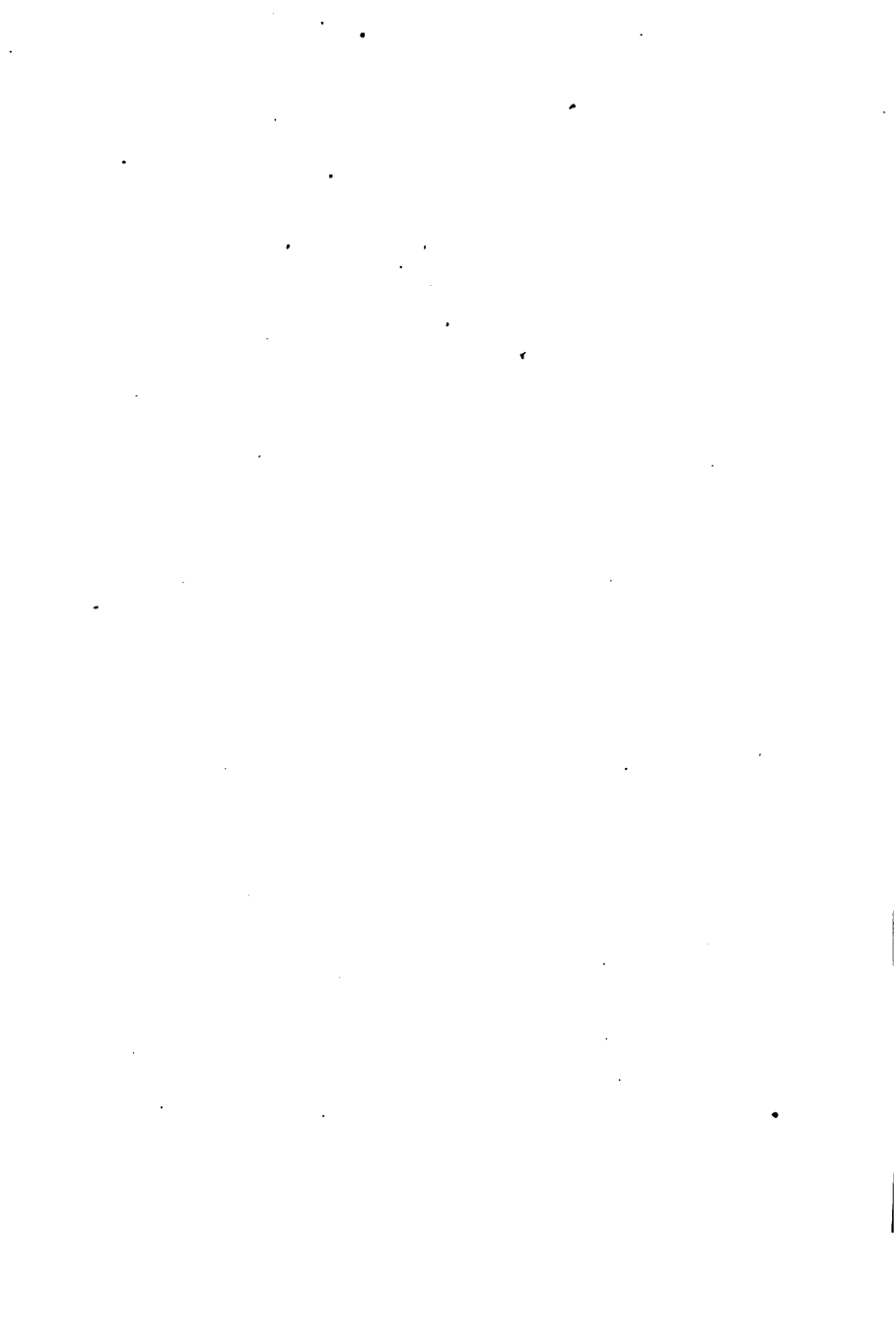


*A TALE OF THE
ENGLISH REFORMATION*



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'I CAN ACCEPT NOTHING HERE—NOTHING FROM A PERJURED PRIEST.'
See page 65.

CECILY:

A Tale of the English Reformation.

BY

EMMA LESLIE.

AUTHOR OF 'LEOFWINE THE SAXON,' 'CONRAD,' ETC.



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CECILY.



CHAPTER I.

MASTER AUDLEY'S FAMILY.

THE slant rays of the setting sun lay in floods of golden light on the fields and marsh lands of the flat Essex landscape, as two travel-stained and weary looking pedestrians toiled along the hot, dusty road.

‘Almost home,’ exclaimed one of the young men after a lengthened silence; ‘yonder is Giddy Hall, the house of Sir Anthony Cooke, and the manor-house is not a mile beyond it.’

‘Sir Anthony Cooke,’ repeated his companion; ‘is he not one of the preceptors of the young King?’

‘Yes, that he is, and a more learned or more godly knight could not be chosen to instruct his Grace. The family are in London now, but you will find them ever in their places in church while they are in this neighbourhood.’

‘Then Giddy Hall is in my parish, I suppose.’

‘Yes; and I sometimes wish it was in mine. But I will not grudge thee this help, good brother, seeing I shall so soon have help that no priest could hope for a few years ago.’

‘Ah! this year of grace, 1549, is one that will long be remembered in the realm of England, for we have now boldly followed the protesting States of Germany, and the prayer-book is being reformed, the mass abolished, and the images removed. The Reformation is fairly instituted in England.’

‘Yes; it is a true and blessed fact that the Reformation is begun; but, my brother, there is still much work to do, especially in country villages like this of Edendale, where the people are slow to welcome any change, especially such changes as the dissolution of the monasteries has brought in many places. But we will talk of this to ourselves another time, for here come the master’s sons to meet us and welcome you;’ and the next minute two well-grown lads came shyly forward, and were presented to the stranger as Dick and Rupert Audley.

The parties were now close by the manor-house, which stood a little back from the road on the outskirts of the village. It did not seem that much time or care had been expended on the embellishment of the estate; and, in truth, Master Audley had neither means nor inclination to do more than turn a few sheep loose on the lawn in front of the house, to keep the grass from growing too high. Dame Audley cultivated a few flowers, besides her herb-garden of dill, and tarragon, and sage, and clary; but these were at the back, and there was only a stretch of grass dotted over with trees, in

place of flower-beds, in front of the wide porch which was the principal entrance of the house.

There was another group in this porch waiting to welcome the travellers, and when Master Audley and his wife had been introduced Mildred and Kate were presented, and then the whole company went indoors, to sit down to the substantial evening meal which had been kept waiting for the guests.

'Now, good Brother Thomas, you must make a hearty meal, for, I can assure you, you are right welcome among us,' said his friend, as he seated himself at the long oaken table.

'Welcome? Ah, Father Martin can tell somewhat of how welcome you are like to be, for the church has been closed since the Convent of St. Agnes was suppressed, in the late King's reign,' said the host, helping his visitor to some huge slices of cold beef.

'And so the new service is to be performed there next Sunday,' said Dame Audley, with something of a sigh, and glancing at her daughters as she spoke.

'And will it be in English—all English, so that the vulgar and unlearned can understand every word that is said?' asked Kate.

'Ah, that is the strangest part of the business to me, for it seems there will be no mysteries in this new religion—nothing but what ordinary men and women can understand if they like; and this, I fear, will offend the people almost as much as taking the images of the Virgin and the saints out of the church. There was almost a riot over that.'

'Yes; father, being justice of the peace, had to ride over and protect the King's messengers,' said

Rupert, 'and mother would not trust us out of her sight for fear the people should take vengeance upon us; and she said they were half in the right too.'

'Tush, tush, boy; no words against the King,' interposed his father quickly; 'poor folks like us cannot pretend to understand the reason for these changes. We must obey the King's Grace in all things.'

"In all things," repeated Master Audley's eldest daughter; 'but I thought you said these new doctrines had been approved by the people—I mean by the learned doctors of religion and the most thoughtful of the people; and that it would be well if kings were guided somewhat by their subjects in making such changes as these.'

Her father fidgeted and looked uneasy while the young lady was speaking, and answered quickly, 'Well, well, Mildred, perhaps I did say something like it; but you must be careful how you repeat my words, or they may sound little less than treason; and one needs to be careful in these changing times.'

'They are evil days in which we live, and I fear worse are coming,' said Dame Audley; 'for since the King has put down the monasteries, the country has been overrun with begging friars and poor starving folk. It would have been better to let things alone, and—'

'Mother, mother, what are you saying? When the King's warrant came down for our Convent of St. Cyrus to be closed, you said you felt like to die with joy that Kate was coming home to us again,' said Dick eagerly.

'So she did, my boy, and the loss of our girl was a grief that shadowed all our lives,' said his father.

'And you could not be so glad as I was,' said Kate; 'for after I read the New Testament that was given to sister Lucy, and learned that prayers to the Virgin, and many other things, were contrary to the command of God, I felt sure my heresy would one day be found out, and then I should be sent to those horrible dungeons to be starved to death secretly, if I were not made a public example of and burned. But instead of this, the King's warrant came and set me free; and I heard that all the world had found the truth that came to me in the convent, and I could go to the church and read the Bible that had been set up there by the King's command without fear of being called a heretic.'

'Yes, yes, Kate, what you say is true enough; but the great lords who hold the convent lands care nothing for the poor. In these days when there are more labourers than can find employment, the daily dole is a sore loss to many; and now that the common lands are being inclosed, there will not be food enough to eat; and what the end will be I dread to think.'

No one replied to this, for all knew that the lady's fears were only too well founded—that the discontent among the poor, starving peasants was driving them into open rebellion, and that the wandering monks turned out of house and home were telling the people that this was all a part of the new religion that the young King and the Lord Protector had established. The charges they brought against many who were now proud to call themselves Protest-

ants, as they held the convent and abbey lands, were only too true; for many were proud and ambitious and self-seeking, caring nothing for the Gospel, although they called themselves Gospellers, and urged that all who would not conform to the new doctrine should be imprisoned.

When the family arose from the table Kate and Mildred withdrew to their own chamber, for they knew their father was anxious to know something of the new rector who had just been sent to take charge of the parish, and would rather be left alone with his guests, for a short time, at least. So the sisters sat down together on the broad window-seat, Kate resting her head on Mildred's shoulder. They were silent for a few minutes; but at length Kate said with a half sigh, 'I am afraid mother regrets having given her consent.'

'Her consent to what?' asked Mildred, whose thoughts just then were with the peasants, and what she had heard about their rising to resist the harsh laws that had been passed against them.

'Why, Mildred, you seem to forget that my wedding will be as—as shocking as your own!' she added with a forced laugh.

'Why, darling, you are not going to marry a priest; and since the Parliament has passed a law permitting priests to do this, I cannot see that it is so shocking, after all.'

'But you forget that I am—that I have been—a nun,' whispered Kate. 'Old Hodge asked me only yesterday if I was not afraid to do this, and I am sure a good many people think I ought to be.'

'Well, tell them to go and talk to young Farmer

Goodman about it,' said Mildred impatiently; 'I suppose he ought to be afraid of wedding a nun.'

'Yes, I suppose so. Mildred, will anybody come to our wedding, do you think?' asked her sister, in some anxiety.

'Bless the child! why shouldn't they come?' exclaimed Mildred. 'We have not asked any of our grand neighbours, as you know, because mother and I thought it would be better to provide a bountiful meal for the poor people; and the only proper thing about our wedding will be the hippocras, and mother said it would be no wedding at all without that.'

'And there will be no marchpane and rich comfits, such as I learned to make at the convent,' said Kate, as though she were disappointed at losing this opportunity of displaying her culinary skill.

'Never mind, dear; you can make a marchpane when you get to your new home. O Kate, how mother will miss her two girls, especially her little sacred daughter, as she used to call you!'

'You must not let her miss me, Mildred; you will only be in the next parish, while I shall be so far off; although father has promised to bring her to Oxford to see me very soon.'

'I will come very often to see her; but I—I am afraid she frets a little at losing us both at once.'

'She frets, too, about the poor people; she is afraid they will do something desperate, and make their condition even worse than it is,' said Kate.

'It cannot be worse,' said Mildred; 'poor old Widow Watkins' son has been branded as a vagabond, and must serve that hard rich man, Sir Peter Temple, for two years as his slave.'

'O Mildred, surely they will not enforce this new, cruel law,' exclaimed Kate.

'But they are doing it,' said her sister. 'I was in the village to-day, and heard all about the poor widow's troubles, and Hodge Watkins is not the only one that has been informed against as an idle vagabond.'

'But, Mildred, if this cruel law is fully enforced the poor people must all become slaves ; for I heard father say that if any lived idly and loiteringly for three days he could be informed against, and the justice of the peace could order him to be branded on the breast with a V, and to serve the informer two years as his slave. He said, also, that the master need only provide him with the poorest food, and might set him to the hardest toil, and compel him to work by beating or chaining him, and if he ran away and was absent a fortnight, the letter S could be branded on his cheek or forehead, and he become a slave for life.'

'Yes, I heard father say the law never would be enforced, but it will it seems ; and the worst of it is, that the poor people think it is all caused by the new religion, by the Gospellers, like Sir Peter Temple, who have possession of the convents and abbeys, and who now want to reduce the people to slavery, that they may grow rich on their labour, they say ; and they wish the holy fathers would come back and give them their daily dole of alms ; that, at least, kept them from starving.'

'Does father know about poor Hodge ?' asked Kate, eagerly ; 'could not he have given him a few days' work, just to save him from this ?'

'Father says he can barely make the land pay for itself, as it is. You see, a few years ago the people—all the poor people—were almost like slaves; they tilled their lord's land as payment for their own garden and cottage, and these fields were ploughed and planted, and enriched their owners; but, now that wages must be paid to have this work done, it pays better to turn them into sheep runs, and everybody is doing so, and the poor labourers are turned out of house and home, and can get no employment anywhere. Some almost wish they were not free-men, but churls like their fathers; but others say that they will not be robbed of their liberty again, and talk fiercely against the new religion as the cause of all their misery.'

'Oh dear! I wish they could know that this new religion sets people free, instead of enslaving them. But it is a pity the King's Grace cannot know how much evil is done in the name of the new opinions,' said Kate, with a deep sigh.

'This new law is put forth to stop vagrancy,' said Mildred; but the poor people say that Protestants like Sir Peter are at the bottom of it, and they hate the new religion through such men as he is.'

'It would be better if Archbishop Cranmer could have his way, and take the revenues of the abbeys to build and endow schools. I heard Martin say it was a grief to his Grace of Canterbury that he could not do this—that it was with difficulty he could save anything for the Universities at Oxford and Cambridge.'

'Yes; Martin grows quite hot and angry at the convents and abbeys being given away, as they have

been, to worldly, ambitious men, who call themselves Protestants because they hold these lands, but are a disgrace to any religion ; and he sometimes fears that persecution will be sent to prove who are really on God's side in this struggle.'

Kate shivered at the word 'persecution.' 'I cannot bear to think of what happened in the late King's reign,' she said ; 'and—and I fear if such a time should come again I might bring trouble upon another, and that, you know, Mildred, would make it worse than bearing it for one's self ;' and the tears welled up to Kate's eyes as she spoke.

'My darling, we must not borrow trouble like that. If Raymond Goodman were here he would tell you that he would rather take the risk of the trouble, with the right to protect you. But hush ! mother is coming to us ; do not let her see you in tears. She is sad enough already, when she thinks of our approaching separation.'





CHAPTER II.

GOSSIP.

IN these early days of the 'boy-King,' Edward the Sixth, it was hard to determine whether the reformed faith or the monkish superstition, that had so long been dominant in England as everywhere else, would prove to have the stronger hold upon the people's minds. True, among the more learned and cultured classes of society the reformed doctrine had made great progress, and also among the people of the towns; and Henry the Eighth, from motives of State policy, had thrown off the supremacy of the Pope, and declared that henceforth the reigning sovereign was to be recognized as the head of the English Church; but the battle was by no means won yet, and in the suppression of the monasteries a blow was struck at the struggling Reformation hardly less disastrous in its results than the old superstition had received in the breaking up of those nurseries of ignorance and vice. In the disposal of the abbey lands and revenues of the Church the King gave but small heed to the advice and importunity of Cranmer, and it was with difficulty that he could save even the scraps and crumbs of

this wealth for the endowment of schools and the promotion of learning. To increase his own wealth and pay his accumulated debts was what Henry thought of; and so the patrimony of the Church was bestowed upon soldiers and courtiers—men, for the most part, who cared nothing at all for religion, but found it convenient, for consistency's sake, to call themselves 'Protestants,' as they could not then be accused of robbing a Church they professed to reverence. Like the King, they cared only for their own aggrandisement in their management of the property bestowed upon them; and in these transition times, when the old feudal system had been broken up, but free labour could hardly be made remunerative to the employer, they turned all the ploughed lands into sheep-runs, as not requiring the labour that would be necessary for the cultivation of the soil. As a natural consequence, food was dear, and thousands who were willing to work were out of employment, while the wandering monks and friars, who had been turned out of house and home, industriously sowed sedition and rebellion, and a fierce hostility to the new faith, which they said was the cause of all the trouble.

Truly, England was miserable enough this year of grace 1549, and many, knowing the feeling of the great mass of the people outside the centres of culture and learning, watched with some anxiety the reception given to the new Book of Common Prayer in English, which was to take the place of the Latin service of the mass.

None were more anxious than our friends the Audleys. The rector of the adjoining parish, Martin

Scrope, had not waited for the permission of King and Parliament to preach a pure and enlightened Gospel; for at the peril of life and liberty he had taught his people the reformed doctrine, and many outside his own parish, too. The Audleys were among his staunchest friends and supporters, and when, with the suppression of the convent, their own parish church was closed, they walked some miles to attend the simple service conducted by Father Martin in his own parish, for the convent lands were given away, but no provision was made for the support of the parish priest; and, now that Father Thomas Boyne had come among them, his stipend would be the merest pittance—not enough to support him had not Master Audley volunteered to receive him into his house free of charge.

Meantime, Scrope had a little patrimony of his own, and, now that an act of Parliament had been passed permitting priests to marry, Mildred Audley was to become his wife. He had, through the interest of friends, secured the services of a man like-minded with himself for the neglected parish of Edendale; and he was no less anxious than his future father-in-law as to the reception that would be accorded to his friend and to the new Book of Common Prayer.

Edendale church had been closed for some time now—at least, for all public services. The official visit had been paid to remove the images of the Virgin and St. Agnes, and efface the pictures on the walls by whitewashing them. The altar had also been cleared of its crucifix and lights, and a Bible placed on a convenient stand for the use of

any parishioner who might wish to read it; but no one except Mildred and Kate Audley ever entered the church after its desecration by the London workmen, for no one in Edendale would have ventured to obey the King's command in this matter.

It was a bright, warm Sunday morning when the new service was to run the gauntlet of public opinion, and, long before the bells began to ring, groups of people were seen strolling down the road toward the churchyard gate. Many came from a distance, too, not a few of them riding on horseback, with their wives or daughters on the pillion behind.

'Father Thomas will have a good congregation this morning,' remarked Master Audley, rubbing his hands with satisfaction, as he stood in the porch, waiting for his two daughters to appear.

'I wonder what they will think of the new way of things!' said Dame Audley, with a little anxiety in her tone.

'Well, it is something that they have come,' remarked Kate. 'I was afraid that we should be the only people there after what has been said about the church being desecrated.'

'I do not think there is much to fear now. People must like the new English service that they can understand better than repeating and listening to words they do not know the meaning of;' and Mildred's bright face beamed with a joyful smile, as she walked by her sister's side along the road to the church.

The rector had gone before any one else was likely to be there; and now the long silent bells were ringing out their welcome call, and groups of

people, rich and poor, forgetting their grievances for once, were wending their way along the almost deserted road leading to the church.

‘This is like old times, dame,’ whispered Master Audley gleefully, as they exchanged nods and greetings with one and another of their more distant neighbours; and he tried to forget the worn, pinched faces of so many of the villagers, who, with hardly suppressed anger, had come to witness the inauguration of this new state of things, that was to bring to them the old feudal slavery, as they heard.

Master Audley knew something of their thoughts and fears, but these would soon be set right by the explanations and admonitions of Father Thomas Boyne; and so he enjoyed to the full this happy Sunday morning, and walked into church followed by his family, feeling very grateful that the Gospel would now be preached in all its fulness and simplicity.

By the time the bells had finished chiming the church was quite full, and Master Audley saw that Sir Peter Temple and his family and servants were present—a fact that was also noted by others in the congregation. Curiosity had evidently brought most of the audience together; and when Father Thomas appeared and began to repeat the Lord’s Prayer in English, looks of wondering amazement passed from one to the other, for, although many of them had learned it in Latin, the words conveyed no meaning to their understanding; but now the words, ‘Our Father,’ so familiar in every-day life, but so strange as the language of prayer, were listened to with eager curiosity by many who heard it that day for the first time in their lives.

But to the majority of the congregation it seemed that the new service was little less than an offence. 'I never did like these Gospellers,' muttered one, glancing at the new knight as he passed through the church porch at the conclusion of the service.

'You won't catch me coming again, when there's no more to see than in my own barn,' said another. 'I wonder them London knaves wasn't afraid of touching our beautiful image of the Virgin; and they do say it's been burned, too.'

'Ah, like enough!' said his neighbour, shaking his head and crossing himself as he spoke. 'These be evil days, when even the images of the saints are seized to enrich the Gospellers.'

'But what did you think of the English prayers, gossip?' asked another.

'English! Why, I shouldn't have known they was English if it hadn't been told me beforehand.'

'Give me the mass and the old religion,' said another. 'This new-fangled Gospel may be all very well for people that's got nothing else to do but to save their souls, but it ain't fit for poor people, that can't be expected to understand such things. We're willing to pay tithes and church dues for a holy father to put things straight for us up above; but to pay, and pray for yourselves too, ain't quite the honest thing, as I take it.'

'Ah, you're right there, neighbour,' put in another; 'what do we know about praying for ourselves? Let the priests do it: that's their trade, and every man to his trade, I say.'

'Ay, ay, to be sure; when we're willing to

pay for it, why shouldn't we have it? A nice thing it'll be when a man's got to look after his own soul as well as his farm! How can he expect to take care of both?'

'Why, the country will be quite ruined if this burden is forced upon us; and things are bad enough now! No, no; let us have back our old priests, to take care of things up above for us; we've got enough to do to get bread to eat in these hard times.'

These, and other similar snatches of conversations, reached Mildred's ear, as she waited near the churchyard gate for her mother and father; for Master Audley had drawn Sir Peter Temple aside to speak to him about the new rector, and Dame Audley had been left with the knight's daughter, standing near the church porch.

The Audleys had only seen Miss Temple once or twice before, but, hearing that she came from court, and had been in the service of the Queen Dowager Catherine, they were in considerable awe of the young lady, and Dame Audley hardly knew what to do when she was left with her by the gentlemen.

But she soon forgot the court lady in talking to Cecily Temple, for she was a sweet, gentle girl, who, under the careful instruction of her royal mistress, Catherine Parr, had embraced the reformed doctrines from an intelligent comparison of them with the old faith. She was full of sanguine hope and expectation that, now these had become the religion of the land by Act of Parliament and the royal command, the rest would be easy enough, and that a glorious day had dawned for England and the Reformation.

'The next service will be a wedding, I hear—a double wedding,' said Mistress Temple. 'I am so glad your daughter is going to marry a priest; for it will teach——'

But Mistress Temple stopped, for the look of dismay that came into Dame Audley's face warned her that, for some reason, this marriage was not quite agreeable to her. 'Mistress Temple, I don't believe it will last,' she said; 'the people don't like it.'

'What won't last?' asked the young lady.

'This new religion. It may be all very well for the King and Lord Protector, but I'm beginning to think that it is not fit for the poor; they've not been used to think for themselves, and they're too wicked and too ignorant to do it now; and so it was much better to have a priest to pray for them.'

It was now Cecily's turn to look amazed at hearing this speech from the Dame, for she had heard from her waiting-maid that the Audleys were all Gospellers, and she had often wished to know Mildred and Kate; so that to hear the lady express her disapproval of what she had seen that morning was a shock indeed, and she turned away, feeling rather disappointed, wondering whether Mildred shared in her mother's fears.

She found herself near Mildred before she was aware of it, and upon the impulse of the moment she said, 'How did you like our new service?'

'Oh, very, very much! I thought if the people could only have joined in the prayers, and had not stood staring about them, it would have been almost like heaven,' said Mildred warmly.

‘I am glad that some one besides myself enjoyed the service. I could almost have fancied that I was in the palace at Greenwich again, with my dear royal mistress, listening to some of the services she often had for the benefit of her maidens in her own private apartments.’

‘I am afraid some of the people do not like the new order of things,’ said Mildred.

‘No, I suppose not, but still I am surprised ; for in London nearly all the people—the poor as well as the rich—have embraced the new opinions.’

‘I suppose we of the country districts are more slow in learning to appreciate any new thing ; and then the people do not think much, as a rule, but are content to take things as they come a good deal, so long as they do not give trouble.’

‘Well, then, I should have thought they would have accepted this change with less grumbling than there is,’ said Cecily.

Mildred coloured a little, for she saw that her unguarded speech was likely to lead her into a difficulty. ‘They have been roused to think for themselves more lately by what has happened with the abbeys and convents ; but all their thoughts have been turned against this religion, and the friars have taught them that it is through this that they are so badly off just now.’

Mildred could not say to this girl that it was through such men as her father that the new opinions were in ill repute among the poor, but Cecily could understand it as well as though Mildred had expressed all her thoughts. A troubled look came into her face ; but after a minute or two she said :

'I cannot do much, but I think I can persuade my father to pay the new rector a stipend out of the convent lands. It is but fair and just, and no favour, since we have all the endowments of the church. Not that it was a free, unmerited gift from the King,' added Cecily quickly; 'my father earned it fairly by his service in the field of battle—the unfair thing is that the King should have paid his debts in this way.'

'Yes; it would have been better to endow schools and provide for the poor,' said Mildred, who was afraid to say too much upon such a delicate subject as this.

'There is to be a wedding, I hear, on Tuesday. I did hope I should have been asked,' said Cecily, wishing to say something to put Mildred at her ease again.

'Would you come?' asked Mildred eagerly.

'Yes, indeed, I should like to come,' said Cecily frankly; 'yours will be almost the first marriage, I should think, under the new Act; and you are very brave to dare to become a priest's wife.'

'Brave—ah! but you do not know Martin Scrope, or you would not think this so strange and bold,' said Mildred.

'I do not think it strange and bold; I think it is just the best thing that can be. Every parish priest ought to marry, and he would be able to understand the cares and hopes and temptations of his people better, besides having the help of a wife in his work. I may come, then, and see the wedding,' said Cecily.

'Oh, yes, indeed, and if you will come home with us afterward we shall like it. We cannot offer you

a rich banquet such as a London lady would have ; it is not to be a marriage-feast at all, but a good, substantial meal will be spread, and all the poor of the village will be welcomed.'

'Oh, that will be better than any marriage-feast ! Your sister who is to be married at the same time was a nun in our convent of St. Agnes, was she not ?'

'Yes ; and she is afraid that the people will be so shocked at the thought of a nun being married that they will refuse to come to the wedding, so that she will be pleased to hear you are willing to do so.'

'I will not fail, for I wish to see it,' said Cecily ; 'I must say "good-bye" now, for I can see my father coming, and he will wonder why I left your mother ;' and with a pleasant smile Cecily Temple went back to meet her father, leaving Mildred in a state of bewildered astonishment at her own boldness in talking to the 'court lady' as she had done.





CHAPTER III.

THE FEAST WITHOUT GUESTS.

THE Audleys were universally beloved by the villagers of Edendale until suspicion and distrust were sown in their minds by the monks on account of their religious opinions. At an ordinary time the marriage of the two daughters would have attracted everybody to the church, and there would have been a general holiday and rejoicing, especially when it became known that a bountiful feast had been provided by their good friend, to which all would be welcomed. But Mildred saw, to her dismay, that the church was almost empty, and only a few children and wandering beggars were standing about the churchyard when the wedding party went through it. She heard, too, one of the boys saying, 'Tain't no wedding at all, the prior says, but a sin against holy Church, and a curse is sure to come of it.'

Mildred hoped that her sister had not heard these words, or her mother either, for Dame Audley was already so distressed and anxious that she would fain have had them put off the wedding until more peaceful times. It was a comfort to her, therefore, to see Cecily Temple waiting for them in

the church, and Dame Audley was much gratified to notice that the lady had donned one of her richest dresses to do honour to her daughter's marriage.

But still, nothing could dispel the gloom that hung over the wedding-party ; for several times while Father Boyne was reading the simple, solemn service the church resounded with deep, hollow groans, although no one could tell where they came from. People came and peeped in at the doors and windows, but very few ventured to trust themselves inside the church ; and when at last the wedding-party came forth again, even these stood aside, silent and moody, without a word of cheer or congratulation for the brides, who had ever been their friends and had helped them in many a time of distress.

Master Audley was very indignant, and as he walked down the churchyard path with Cecily Temple he said half aloud, 'The knaves do not deserve a share of the feast, since they will not wish the wenches Godspeed on their wedding day.'

But he was not put to the trouble of dismissing his guests, for none came to eat the huge joints of beef, or drink the ale that had been broached, and even Cecily Temple felt sad and depressed when she sat down with the family party at the long oaken table that was loaded with substantial food that no one came to eat.

No one cared to sit long with those laden tables in view ; and, on the plea that they had a long journey before them, Farmer Goodman hurried away his bride as soon as possible, for he could see that she was almost overcome, and only maintained her calmness for the sake of others. Martin Setope

made excuse for taking Mildred soon afterward, and Master Audley was not sorry to have his daughters taken out of a scene that was full of bitter reminders of what the world thought of the marriage of priests and nuns, although it had been legalised by act of Parliament, and was certainly more in accordance with the word of God than the unnatural system that was so revered by the people.

Dame Audley had managed to restrain all expressions of her grief and dismay until the departure of the newly-married couples; but after they had gone she gave way to a burst of irrepressible anguish. 'Oh, what have I done! what have I done! weak, wicked woman that I am, to give my children to—'

'Hush, hush, dame,' interrupted her husband peremptorily. 'The wenches are married to good men and true, and as for what these poor, ignorant varlets think of the business, it matters little, since the Archbishop and the Council deem such marriages good and lawful.'

'Yes, yes, I know,' sobbed Dame Audley; 'but what if the times should change again? Our King is but a young and delicate boy, and after him would come the Princess Mary, who, they do say, would bring back the mass, and restore the abbeys, and—and what would Mildred be then?'

The squire tried to laugh. 'Why, Martin Scrope's wife; who should she be?' he said.

But the dame shook her head. 'Our prior of St. Agnes, who is a learned man, told Widow Watkins that the marriages of priests, not being sanctioned by holy Church, could not be aught but sin;

Oh that my Mildred had not been tempted to this dreadful fate ! ’

‘ So the prior is here again, and has set Widow Watkins at you about the business,’ said her husband impatiently ; ‘ I wish I could keep him out of the country ; for mischief is sure to follow one of his visits. Of course he warned the people not to come to Kate’s wedding, and paid some knave to groan in the church, I ’ll warrant you. There, there, dame ; don’t cry ; I only hope we shall have no more mischief done by this meddlesome prior than our wedding feast spoiled.’

‘ Can this prior of St. Agnes have anything to do with our lads going off ? ’ exclaimed Miss Temple, who had promised Mildred to stay and comfort her mother.

‘ Oh, most likely it is his handiwork,’ said Master Audley ; ‘ but who has gone ? ’ he asked.

‘ That poor knave, Hodge Watkins,’ said Cecily, while the hot blood rose to her cheek as she pronounced his name, for she well knew how her father’s oppressive action had been condemned by Master Audley.

He shook his head. ‘ I feared it ; I feared it,’ he said ; ‘ Hodge is a trusty knave when fairly treated ; but he, with many others, is beginning to think he has rights above the cattle, and hunger seems to sharpen men’s wits.’

‘ It is a cruel, cruel law that gives these men to be the slaves of those who inform against them My father doth not mean to be cruel,’ said Cecily pleadingly, the tears filling her eyes as she spoke.

‘ No, no ; he only forgets that the knaves are

men,' said Master Audley quickly; 'but it is the forgetting this that makes all the mischief.'

'But why did they pass such a wicked law?' exclaimed Cecily passionately.

'To serve the people with instead of bread, it would seem, since it was passed to stop begging,' said Master Audley ironically.

'Ah, the Council and the Parliament are wise, I doubt not, but they will learn yet that hunger knows no law; and who can tell but that this bidding priests to marry is as bad?' said Dame Audley.

'Now, don't fret, good dame, and think, because one law is not good, that all new laws are bad. But tell me now, Mistress Temple, about these lads going off. When did they go?'

'Yesterday; and I heard this morning that many more had gone from the village—had gone to Norfolk, where one Master Kett, a tanner, had promised them a better Reformation than the King and Archbishop would give them.'

'The monks are at the bottom of it. A better Reformation, forsooth! I wonder what the silly knaves will believe next;' and Master Audley passed up and down the room in his excitement. Presently he came back to where Cecil was sitting with his wife, and said, 'I must see Sir Peter about these matters, for the poor knaves will run into trouble if wiser heads think not for them.'

'My father will, doubtless, be glad to see you, but I fear his thoughts are too much given to the news brought by a messenger from London this morning. The Lord Protector has listened to the complaints of the poor people about the common

lands being enclosed, and news has come that the fences must at once be removed.'

'I am glad of it,' impulsively spoke Master Audley; 'it will teach the people that this new religion was not invented to rob the church and enrich the nobles, as the monks teach them.'

'My father is very angry about it,' said Cecily quietly; 'so do not tell him what you think. Do you believe Hodge would be brought back at once?' asked Cecily rather anxiously.

'Your father has not sent to search for him?'

Cecily shook her head, and her cheeks grew crimson as she whispered, 'I wish you could fetch him back, or—or he will be made a slave for all his life.'

Master Audley looked down compassionately at the bowed head and shame-stricken face, and saw how nobly this girl was trying to save her father from the commission of a great wrong, and poor Hodge from further suffering.

'I will go, myself, in search of the knave, and it may be that I shall learn something more concerning this gathering at Norfolk,' said he; and he went to look after his sons, and to see that his servants brought the cattle to the home-field; for there was no telling what the foolish people might do, urged on by the priests and monks, who were constantly coming and going.

But, truth to tell, although Master Audley took these precautions, and went, moreover, to look at the moat with its drawbridge, to see that it could be made serviceable if necessary, still he did not think seriously that there would be any danger in this gathering of discontented men at Norfolk.

Rupert walked round with his father to see that the fortifications of the house were all in efficient order in case of an attack from the mob who would follow at the heels of Kett the tanner.

‘I have heard of the man before, and I could wish he went more wisely to work,’ said Master Audley, as he and Rupert examined the chains and pulleys that held the drawbridge in its place.

‘Is it not treason to incite the King’s lieges to resist the law?’ asked Rupert.

‘Ay, that it is. But talk not of treason. Kett means not treason. He would be the friend of the poor; and the King hath been ill-advised in the matter of this vagrancy and how to stop it. The Lord Protector, too, forgets that men are beginning to think for themselves about many things, and can no longer be driven like dumb sheep to the bidding of any man.’

‘But they will do the bidding of this Kett,’ said Rupert.

‘Yes, because they believe in him—believe he is their friend, and will give them a better Reformation than these new doctrines can ever bring. But look to these chains, and see that they are in working order. I can see Sir Peter Temple riding this way, and I want to have a word with him about these foolish knaves;’ and Master Audley hurried forward to meet the knight before he should reach the house. The latter reined in his horse as he approached, and tried to put some little curb on his temper; but this was harder work than controlling his charger. They had scarcely exchanged the usual salutations, when he burst into a storm of

angry invective against the Council and Parliament but especially against the Lord Protector, Somerset.

‘He is ruining the country to enrich himself, and does it in the King’s name. He has taken two hundred manors for himself, and thrown down several religious houses in London to build himself a mansion on the bank of the Thames; and since even his own brother is now beginning to resist his extortion, he thinks to make friends of the common people by listening to their clamour about the enclosure of the commons.’

Sir Peter had talked himself almost out of breath, but his anger had by no means abated yet, and when Master Audley ventured to say that every village had the right of pasturage on the common from time immemorial, the knight’s wrath was at once turned against him.

‘So you, too, are one of the seditious mob who would run to crown the Norfolk tanner rather than his Grace King Edward!’ he passionately exclaimed.

‘I know but little of this man, who seems to have made himself a leader of the discontented; but I would bid you have a care, Sir Peter, whom you call seditious.’

‘Care! I don’t care!’ said the angry knight; ‘I tell you I have been most shamefully used. A few barren acres are given me for long years of service and exposure in the field of battle, and these are grudged by the Church and the monks who have been turned out to make room for me; and, as if it wasn’t enough that a swarm of friars should set my own servants against me, my neighbours, who ought to know better, do the same.’

‘What do you mean, Sir Peter?’ inquired Master Audley haughtily.

The knight was not very particular as to the language he used, and told his neighbour, in no doubtful terms, that he had counselled Hodge Watkins to run away from his service.

Master Audley looked at Sir Peter in no small astonishment when he heard this. ‘Why, I have not seen the poor fellow since—’

‘There, did I not say you had set the man against me? Poor fellow, indeed!’ interrupted Sir Peter; ‘what right has he to be called “poor fellow?” didn’t I give him as much as the law orders—bread and water—which was more than he could get before I took him.’

‘Well, I don’t know what you may think about this new law, but I call it a wicked and oppressive one, and I cannot but pity poor Hodge. Do you know what he was before the convent came into your hands, Sir Peter?’

‘No; I don’t know, and I don’t care! The fellow is my slave now for two years, and I have a right to demand that he shall labour in my fields and live with my dogs, if I choose to order it.’

‘Yes, that is true, and the law gives you the right to do this to a man who was reeve to the convent, and a true and trusty servant, too. Which is worse, you or the law, I cannot say.’

‘I only take my rights—that which the law gives me,’ excitedly exclaimed Sir Peter; ‘but I know you have been setting these people against me. That woman Watkins, who came whining to me about that knave who has run away, told me as

much. You and the friar had both been setting her on, she said.'

'It is false, Sir Peter; I may have condoled with the poor creature on the misery the changing times have brought her; for it is but a year or two since she lived in ease and comfort—the helper, and comforter too, of her less fortunate neighbours; for Hodge could support her in peace and plenty, and he did it, too, and held up his head like a true-born Englishman, as he is.'

'Well, you yourself confess it is the changing times. Why can't these people submit, as they ought?'

'And do you think they ought to submit to hunger and starvation, which have come to them by no fault of theirs, but is the result of a change in the religion of the country? Do you think they ought to submit without an effort to better their condition? Would you see your daughter perish before your eyes, and make no effort to save her?'

Sir Peter lost his voice in the astonishment he felt at these last words being addressed to him. 'Do you know you are speaking to a knight?' he at length demanded.

'I know that I am speaking to a man,' said the other fearlessly; 'and I appeal to you, and your knightly honour, by which you are sworn to protect the weak, that you remember these poor creatures are men like yourself. And now, Sir Peter, I will wish you good-day;' and with a courteous bow Master Audley passed on, leaving the angry horseman to turn back or pursue his way to the house as he pleased.



CHAPTER IV.

POPULAR DISCONTENT.

MASTER AUDLEY kept his word, and went in search of Hodge Watkins; for if he did not return to his master within a fortnight he would be branded on the cheek or forehead with the letter S, and be a slave for the rest of his life; and Sir Peter was not the man to show him any mercy, especially just now.

But although the traveller fell in with troops of men every few rods that he rode, all journeying the same way, and talking of the Reformation, at the oak near Norwich where Kett was marshalling his hosts, he saw nothing of Watkins; and at last he thought it wiser to turn back, for he began to fear that this was no mere paltry riot, but a formidable insurrection, which might involve the safety of his own home if he did not take immediate precautions and strengthen his fortifications. Mildred and her husband must be warned of their danger, too, and take refuge in the old homestead; so the fate of Watkins was forgotten for the time in the father's anxiety to secure his own family in safety.

When he reached home again he heard from

Rupert that Sir Peter had gone to London and taken his daughter with him, and it was thought that he might be absent some time; but when he reached the house and went to his wife's chamber he found to his surprise that Cecily Temple was sitting with her.

'Why, how is this?' exclaimed he. 'I have just heard that you had gone to London, Mistress Temple.'

'And you heard truly,' said Cecily, who was dressed for travelling, and had only thrown back her hood. 'We had got beyond the village, when my palfrey suddenly fell lame, and I persuaded my father to leave me here to sit awhile with Dame Audley, while he went back with the servants to know what could ail it, and bring me another. Did you find Hodge Watkins?' she asked in a lower tone.

Master Audley shook his head. 'All the beggars of England are journeying to Norfolk, it seems, and I have hastened back to put my house in order for fear the tanner should think of going with his ragged hosts to London, and pass this way.'

'My father has heard that he is arming and training them as much like an army as he can,' said Cecily, turning pale as she spoke.

Master Audley sighed. 'Mischief will come of it,' he said; 'and it is all through these vagrancy laws. But why are you journeying to London at this time?' he asked. 'The priory could be more easily defended than my poor manor-house; and it would be better for Sir Peter to see to these things himself, especially as he has been a soldier.'

'Yes; my father is greatly vexed that he is

obliged to leave at this time, but he has been sent for by the Council, and fears he may be sent to Boulogne with fresh troops ; in which case he thinks I shall be safer in London with some of my old friends about the court.'

'I am very sorry you are going, my dear,' said Dame Audley ; 'but then if we are to have such trouble as my husband fears I shall not grudge your being in safety, though I did hope to see you very often, as you promised Mildred to come and see me. Now both my girls are gone away, I do feel almost lost sometimes ;' and the poor lady could hardly restrain her tears as she spoke.

She did not feel much alarm as to her own personal safety, for she believed that, with the moat filled, and the various other means of defence they possessed, their home was as impregnable as a castle ; but it was what the swiftly-changing times might bring to her children that almost crushed her spirit, and this was the ever-recurring topic of conversation.

Cecily felt almost inclined to laugh at what seemed to her such far-fetched fears, but when she reached London the next day she heard some news that sent her thoughts back to Dame Audley at once.

The counties of Devon and Cornwall were in insurrection, and Lord Russell, failing to subdue the rebels, had been forced to enter into negotiations. The terms proposed had just been sent by special messenger to the Council. They demanded that the ancient service of the mass should be restored ; that the repealed 'Act of the Six Articles'—an act which the late King in one of his relapses into popery had

issued against heresy, and which, from its severity, was popularly known as the whip with six strings—should be re-enacted; that Cardinal Pole should be admitted to the Council, and at least two abbeys restored in every county.

The influence of the monks and priests was very evident in these demands, but the Council had to proceed with caution in rejecting them, for the rising in Norfolk was more threatening still, and foreign troops had to be hired to be sent against these poor, ignorant dupes of the wily monks.

Cecily Temple had been placed by her father with her friend Mildred Cooke—now young Dame Cecil. Her father, Sir Anthony Cooke, being preceptor to the young King, and her husband being occupied, also, in business about the court, Dame Cecil had made her home near the Fen Church, and not far from the Tower, where the King often resided. Here Cecily Temple met with many of her old friends, and heard all the particulars about the death of her royal mistress, Catherine Parr, who, after the death of Henry VIII., had married the Lord Protector's brother, Seymour, but had died in giving birth to a daughter.

Lady Jane Grey and the Princess Elizabeth had both resided with the Queen Dowager, and they, like Cecily Temple, had profited much from the instruction of this pious and learned lady. Dame Cecil, too, was no less accomplished, and could speak Greek and Latin as well as her native English. But, better than all, to Cecily she was a gentle, sympathizing friend, near enough her own age to understand her difficulties, and feel for her in her anxiety about her father; for Cecily could not hide the fact from her-

self, any more than she could from others, that he really cared nothing for religion, and was a Protestant only in name and from policy. London had hardly recovered yet from the novelty of the introduction of the new Book of Common Prayer, and one of the first questions Cecily asked her friend was of that famous Whitsunday morning when the service in English was read for the first time in the Fen Church.

‘I shall never forget it,’ said Dame Cecil, the tears welling up to her eyes as she spoke. ‘It seemed like what the song of the angels must be when all the congregation joined aloud in the Lord’s Prayer—the sweet, tender ‘Our Father!’

‘Oh how I should like to have heard it!’ said Cecily, scarcely less moved. ‘Things are so different in the country; and O Mildred, I began to feel ashamed of the name ‘Protestant’ and ‘Gospeller’ there, for it has such a different meaning to the poor people, who were helped by the convent as long as the monks were there, but are left to starve now that all the fields are turned into sheep runs.’

‘Yes; I have heard that the people round my old home are very angry at the changes that have been made; but here people are grumbling that things have not gone far enough, and already there are whispers that the Prayer-book must be speedily revised.’

‘Oh dear, I hope they won’t spoil it. I think it is almost perfect,’ exclaimed Cecily. ‘They have taken all my favourite prayers from the breviary, and now, in our own English tongue, they seem more beautiful than ever. I do think if the people could

only understand that most of the prayers in the new book have been taken from the old one, and translated into our own tongue, they would not grumble and make such a fuss about it as they do.'

'Of course it is ignorance that causes all the mischief, and that is why learning is such a helpful handmaid to the new doctrines,' said Dame Cecil. 'We do not see so much of it in London, but still there are many who will not conform to the new state of things, who yet go on mumbling the very same prayers in Latin that we use in English, and think, because they are in an unknown tongue, they must be so much more acceptable to God. Only yesterday I was talking to a woman, and asking her to teach her children the Lord's Prayer in English, but she shook her head most indignantly, and told me they should learn the good old Paternoster, as she had when she was a girl. I could not help smiling, and yet I felt grieved that she would not believe they were the same prayers, only in a different language.'

'It is a pity the priests do not tell the people that there is no other difference than such as is caused by the change from Latin into English, and that it is better to learn the Lord's Prayer in English than in a language they cannot understand.'

Dame Cecil shook her head. 'My dear Cecily, do you not see that if everybody learned even the Lord's Prayer only in English, a great part of the power of the priests would be gone? "Paternoster" is a long word, conveying no meaning beyond its mere sound to thousands who use it; but "Our Father!"—for the people to learn that God had com-

manded them to pray to Him for themselves, that He wanted them to approach Him as needy little children would go to their earthly parent—why, do you not see that there would soon be no further need of a priest to come between them and God as the appointed intercessor, and the whole doctrine of the intercession of the saints and Virgin must very soon follow? No, no, my dear; the priests will never help the people to learn the Lord's Prayer in English; they are doing all they can to hinder it, and to set the people against the new and more simple mode of worship.'

'The people complain, I know, that there is nothing to see, now the images are removed, and the incense no longer used, and music stopped, as it is in many places. They say it is dull; but to me the beautiful English prayers are full of life, and we need nothing to attract our senses from pondering on the sweet, solemn words.'

'You have a godly, earnest man at Edendale now, I know; but, my dear, all priests are not like Father Boyne. Many of them hate the new way, and make the service as uninteresting as they can by mumbling over or gabbling through the prayers, so that the English they speak is no easier to comprehend than the Latin that used to be sung; and when one considers that so few can read, and fewer still afford to buy a book—that they are wholly dependent upon what they hear from the priest—it is not surprising that many complain of the change in religion.'

'But couldn't the Archbishop appoint true and godly men, who have learned to know that the new way is better than the old superstition?' inquired Cecily.

‘Where are the men to be found? Our Bishops, Latimer and Ridley, as well as the Archbishops, are doing all they can, and no one is now to be appointed to the office of priest who cannot read, and homilies compiled by the Bishops are to be read where the priest cannot preach, instead of the old legends of the saints being recited. But still there is much to be done, and the Reformation has many secret enemies, although it is patronized by the King and court, and learned men are coming from all parts of Europe to teach in our Universities the new doctrines of Luther and Zwinglius.’

‘Luther is dead, and Zwinglius too. If they had lived, perhaps they would have come to England to help us,’ said Cecily with a sigh.

‘My dear do not distress yourself. God, who taught Luther, lives and reigns. You forget our God is King of all the earth,’ said Dame Cecil hopefully.

But Cecily shook her head. ‘If you had lived in the country lately you would understand better about the enemies of the Reformation, and how it is many hate it so much. People used to grumble about the monks and friars being greedy and living in luxury, and because of this and the evil lives of the priests men welcomed the new religion. But, now the monks are turned out of house and home, people remember the daily dole given at the convent gates, and how the nuns were always ready to help them with herb tea and distilled waters when they were sick, and that the fields were ploughed and sown, and food cheap; but now the “Gospellers” who hold the convent lands care nothing for the poor, but make food scarce by using the land for pasture.’

'My dear Cecily, is it really so bad as you say?' asked Dame Cecil.

'Oh, yes; I see it and feel it every day,' said Cecily, 'until I am ashamed to be called a Gospeller. And, of course, the monks are not slow to point out the difference the two religions make in the condition of the poor. Oh, why were these abbey lands disposed of so unjustly?' said the young lady passionately.

Dame Cecil shook her head thoughtfully. 'I know that Archbishop Cranmer is anxious about this very thing, but I did not think it was so serious.'

'It seems to me that some people always take the side of the persecuted; and now these monks wander about the country begging and telling the people that God's anger is roused against the land because of the persecution against them, the very men who were loudest in condemning them before take their part, and talk of them as saints and martyrs.'

'Saints and martyrs, indeed!' exclaimed Dame Cecil impatiently. 'They are wolves in sheep's clothing! Let them do some honest work, instead of begging from those who can scarce afford to feed themselves.'

'But you forget there is no employment even for those who would work,' said Cecily ruefully.

'Well, they could at least refrain from inciting the people to rebel against the King's authority. Come, Cecily, you have made me feel quite disheartened by your sad picture of things; let us call the servants to attend us to Paul's Cross. Our Bishop Ridley is to preach there this afternoon, and it will cheer us to hear some of his stirring words.'

Dame Cecil at once gave orders that a retinue of retainers and one or two maids should be ready to attend her and Cecily Temple to St. Paul's Churchyard, where on one side of the wide open green space this famous rostrum stood.

Paul's Cross has been rightly called the Thermopylæ of the Reformation, for here it was that Latimer, Ridley, and others fought the giant superstition that had so long held England in bondage to Rome. It was the plain, simple Gospel message proclaimed by these men, in the very heart of London, in the ears of King and beggar, citizen and stranger, alike, that, next to the printing of the Bible, did more than anything else to open men's minds to the gross imposture that had been practised upon them for so many ages.

It was considered needful, in these days, for ladies of rank to travel, even a few paces from their own door-step, with a host of servants in attendance; and so Dame Cecil and Cecily, escorted and followed by footmen and stewards, made their way through the narrow London streets to the green open space surrounding the old pulpit cross, where the heroic, divinely taught men proclaimed the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.





CHAPTER V.

A CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL.

A BRILLIANT company was gathered in the mansion of the dowager Duchess of Suffolk, who, with her two young sons, Henry and Charles, had come to keep Christmas in London.

Christmas revels were elaborate affairs in those days, and although the tide of fashion had turned in favour of less luxury and display in the affairs of everyday life as well as religion, still the lord of misrule held his court, and his revels were most gorgeous.

The dresses of the assembled company were a sight not often seen ; for here, among these dames of high degree, no limit was imposed by the sumptuary laws, and they were only excelled by the gentlemen, who would have disdained to appear in anything less dainty than white satin, crimson velvet, or cloth of gold.

Among the ladies richly embroidered petticoats, with velvet trains and stomachers set with pearls and jewels, were the prevailing fashion, although there were one or two ladies present who could not aspire to wear velvet ; but these made ample amends

in the costliness of the embroidery, or the richness of the satin and damask of which their dresses were composed. The Duchess of Suffolk had mingled but little in fashionable life since the deaths of her husband and of her dear friend, Queen Catharine Parr; but she had taken up her residence near Cambridge, where her two sons were studying under the famous reformer, Martin Bucer. The sympathies of the Duchess were all on the side of the reformed faith, and she had come to London now to ascertain, by her own observation, the aims and strength of the two opposing factions that divided the governing powers of the country.

The young King was little more than the tool of either party, but since the story had reached her of Edward's appealing to the people when he was at Hampton Court to be good to him and his uncle, the Lord Protector, and that this had been quickly followed by the imprisonment of the Protector, Somerset, while his rival, the Earl of Warwick, had gained possession of the King, and won the interest of the citizens of London, she determined to come to the city, and ascertain for herself whither the ambition of the two parties was likely to tend.

'Religion is made the stalking-horse, of course, Master Cecil, but ambition is at the root of all these quarrels,' said the Duchess.

Master Cecil shook his head in cautious deprecation of both sides, and proceeded to ask if the Duchess had obtained the nursery plate of little Mary Seymour, the daughter of her friend Queen Catharine, whose father had been beheaded a few months previously, and had committed his child to

the care of his wife's early friend, the Duchess of Suffolk. This unfortunate little girl had been most royally provided for by her mother, but her costly nursery plate had been seized by her uncle, who refused to part with her belongings when he gave up the child to the care of the Duchess.

The mention of this bone of contention roused the lady at once. 'No! my little nursling, Mary, will never obtain her own while her uncle has the power to retain it. My Lord of Warwick may love power, but he cannot love riches more than doth my Lord Somerset. Howbeit, I am truly sorry that he is in such evil case, for he is well disposed toward the Reformation, whereas I mistrust Warwick.'

'But why should your grace do this?' asked Cecil.

'Because—but no whisper of this must go abroad, Master Cecil—but he has written to my lady, the Princess Mary, touching her appointment as regent of the kingdom.'

Cecil started as he heard this. 'Is your grace certain of this?' he asked.

'So certain, that the Princess is coming to pay me a visit in all privacy, that she may see and hear for herself, and judge whether this proposal is made in all sincerity,' replied the Duchess.

'The King and Council would never agree to it,' said Cecil hastily.

'I think it is but a wile of Warwick's to have the Princess in his power, and, poor lady, she has suffered enough of late with her ill health, and the harassments of the Council concerning the performance of mass in her household. Different as

our faith is, I cannot but hold with her, that she being but a private gentlewoman, the Council has no right to interfere with the ordering of her household, and if she and her servants desire to attend mass, they have no right to imprison the priest.'

Cecil was too politic to give an opinion adverse to that of the Council in this matter, and the entrance of the Marchioness of Dorset, the lady's step-daughter, gave an opportune break to the conversation. This haughty lady, who was the daughter of the Princess Mary, favourite sister of Henry VIII., and a former wife of the late Duke of Suffolk, bowed stiffly to her young stepmother, and passed on to greet another lady of the company; but her daughter, who was following meekly behind, raised her pensive eyes and furtively greeted her grandame with a glad smile.

'Stay one moment, my Lady Jane,' said the Duchess, laying her hand on her young relative's shoulder, and the Marchioness turned and bowed her permission.

The young lady breathed a sigh of relief at thus being released for a minute or two.

'Now tell me how you are getting on with your studies. I hope you have not forgotten the pious example and instruction of your friend Catharine, the Queen.'

'No, indeed; I could never forget what I learned from that most excellent lady,' said Lady Jane, the tears welling up to her eyes, as she spoke.

'And you continue the study of Latin and Greek?' asked the Duchess, whose own two sons were clever scholars.

'Life would be of little worth to me if I had not the companionship of such books as these languages give me,' said Lady Jane warmly.

'I am glad to hear it, for so few ladies in these days can even read or write; but you and the Princesses, with my Lord Somerset's daughters, will, I trust, prove notable exceptions. Now go to your mother, and presently I will bring some young damsels to you for company.'

'Is the Princess Elizabeth here?' whispered Jane, looking around the room.

'No, no, child. Ask not about the Princess just now; she is ill, and in disgrace with the Council; but love her all the same, for I doubt not that you, as well as she, have grieved for the death of my Lord Seymour.'

'Yes; he was ever kind to me, as well as to the Princess, while we lived with the good lady, Queen Catharine, his wife.' Then the Lady Jane hastened to her mother's side, but was greeted with a frown and a blow from the large fan she carried.

'Kneel down, impudent girl,' commanded her mother; and, scarcely knowing how to restrain her sobs and tears, Lady Jane Grey knelt meekly down by the side of the bench where her mother was sitting. Deference to parents was carried to a length almost absurd in those days, and though few mothers would have made a daughter of thirteen kneel in the midst of a large, mixed company, no one seemed to think the Marchioness of Dorset unduly severe. But the young lady felt truly grateful to her grandmother, when, an hour later, she brought her two young friends, Dame Cecil and Cecily

Temple, and presented them to the Marchioness, and at the same time petitioned that Lady Jane might be allowed to entertain Mistress Temple.

Her mother graciously permitted her to do this, and at the same time invited Dame Cecil to a seat beside her, for she was a person of some political importance, owing to the position her husband held under the Council ; and the Marchioness was no less ambitious in her way than either Somerset or Warwick. She never forgot the fact that her mother was a Princess and the dowager Queen of Louis, King of France, and she had resolved that her daughter Jane should be Queen in turn if it were possible to accomplish it. Young as Lady Jane Grey was, the plan of marrying her to the King Edward was busying the brains of others as well as her mother. Not only the reformers of England, but those on the Continent also, had, in their own minds, at least, made the Reformation in England secure by the union of Edward with his beautiful and pious cousin ; for the fame of the young lady's extraordinary learning and piety had travelled far beyond her native land. So the Marchioness cautiously told Dame Cecil something of this while Jane herself and Cecily went in search of their friends, the daughters of the Lord Protector.

These three ladies were almost as highly educated as Lady Jane Grey ; for one of them was destined, by her ambitious father at least, to occupy the exalted position coveted by the Marchioness of Dorset for her daughter. Fortunately, the young people themselves were in blissful ignorance of the dreams their parents indulged about their wearing

the crown of England, and just now the Protector's daughters were in too much sorrow and trouble concerning their father to think of much besides. News had just reached them, too, of the death of the Queen of Navarre.

'It is all over with the Reformation in France now,' said Lord Hereford, as his sister concluded her recital of the news that had just reached them.

Lady Jane lifted her eyes to the young nobleman, who was bending over her. 'Do you not think that God can take care of it, as well as Queen Margaret?' she asked simply.

'Yes, indeed, my Lady Jane; but since the Reformers have all been driven from Paris, many of them have found a refuge at the court of the Queen of Navarre, and thence they could reach many of the southern villages; but now they must fly to Geneva, as Calvin has done. I greatly fear that France will now crush out all that remains of her Reformation.'

'It seems that the destiny of nations as well as of individuals is involved in this religious question,' said Lady Margaret Seymour.

'Yes; for it is not only religion, but liberty, learning, and freedom from priestly control of our conscience, that we are fighting for now,' said her brother; and there is little doubt but that he looked upon his father as a martyr in the good cause, although we, looking back, can see that Somerset was self-seeking in many of his aims, and put forth the plea of religion to cover his own ambition.

Political intrigue entered so largely into the life of the upper classes then that even this social Christ-

mas gathering was not exempt from it. Doubtless every one of the Duchess' guests had his own private aims and ambitions, which would act as the secret springs of his action in supporting or opposing the tottering fame and fortune of the imprisoned Duke of Somerset; but even beyond this, the Duchess was going to allow her assembly to be used in the Duke's interest, for a warm partisan of the Duke's was chosen as the lord of misrule, and, being accounted a fool for the time being, was allowed to do and say many things that would not be permitted on ordinary occasions.

There was plenty of fun and frolic, and much gay laughing at the mummers and the pranks of the lord of misrule, and at his quaint speeches to one and another of the lords and ladies assembled.

By adroit management these speeches were made to bear a deep political signification very often, although to the unthinking they seemed nothing but wild fun and banter. Many a good word was spoken for the Duke of Somerset that night, and many of damaging report of the ambition, rapacity, and hypocrisy of his rival was set going at the same time.

This last charge was more than suspected by many besides the Duchess of Suffolk, for Warwick had been a staunch Catholic as long as this did not stand in the way of his preferment, but when the reformed doctrines became fashionable he embraced them. The change, however, was made too suddenly for men not to suspect its sincerity. It was at his instigation that the Duke of Somerset had been arrested and committed to the Tower on a charge of

conspiring to kill several of the Council ; but many believed that he himself was aspiring to the supreme control of the State, and the lord of misrule did not spare him in his allusions and inuendoes.

But while this important personage was practising his mad antics, and the mummers were performing their parts, the groups of young people standing together found time to talk of more serious matters. As they stood together now a stranger would have noticed that they were all more simply and plainly dressed than any other ladies in the room. This was especially noticeable in Lady Jane Grey, and Lord Hereford remarked it. The young lady coloured slightly, but said, 'Master Latimer is so often preaching against extravagance in dress, and good Master Aylmer has warned me so many times against yielding to vanity and the love of vain show, that, now I am permitted to order my own apparel, I will always have it neat and becoming to a simple maiden.'

The young nobleman smiled, but his sister was ready with a joke about Lady Jane following her pattern cousin, the Princess Elizabeth. 'And I have heard, too, that my Lady Mary had sent you a very handsome dress for a birthday gift,' said Lady Margaret.

'Yes, she did ; but why should I follow my Lady Mary, who holds by the mass which we have renounced, and not my Lady Elizabeth, who follows God's word ?'

Then Margaret Seymour asked if Lady Jane had heard her father's chaplain preach. 'Master Hooper preached before the King and court, and urged that

there should be a further reform in the ordering of common prayer,' she said.

Cecily started at these words. 'Another reform!' she said. 'What can he mean? Many are complaining now that things have been too much altered.'

'I heard that Master Hooper urged that there should be a more thorough reformation of the church than had been yet attempted,' said Lady Jane Grey.

'Yes, he was preaching from Jonah, and used such freedom of speech that my father feared the Archbishop would be offended; but Master Cranmer only shook his head when some one spoke to him about the bold sermon, and said: 'We must be cautious; we are not in Geneva. The King is young, too, and the times are unsettled.'

'Master Cranmer is wise,' said Cecily.

'And so is Master Hooper,' said Jane Seymour warmly. 'I know not what we should do without his godly help and counsel in this time of trouble. Cecily, you should go to St. Paul's, and hear him expound the Scriptures. Sometimes he has to go twice in the day, so many come to hear him, and he always goes four times a week, for every one is so eager to know what the Scriptures teach concerning many things that it is difficult to get readers enough.'

'I have not heard Master Hooper, but I have been several times to Paul's Cross with my friend, Dame Cecil, to hear Master Ridley and Master Latimer.'

'Were you there one afternoon in November when good Master Latimer forgot the time, and

never noticed, either, that it was growing dark?' asked Lord Hereford.

Cecily laughed and nodded, as she recalled her fright that afternoon. 'Yes, indeed, we were there, and my Lord Mayor and the aldermen; and so earnest was the good Bishop that he never closed his sermon until it was dark, and the linkmen had to conduct my Lord Mayor home. Dame Cecil and I were frightened at first, but the footman got some links after a time, and lighted us home in safety; but I had almost forgotten the sermon in the fright, so that I hope it will not happen again.'

Then the conversation turned upon the number of learned foreigners who had come to England, and how Dame Cecil's sister was translating three of the sermons of the wonderful Italian preacher, Ochino; and then the efforts that had been made to preach the Gospel in Italy—in the very States of the Pope—were eagerly discussed. But it seemed that everywhere, except in England and some of the German States, there were the most active measures being taken to suppress these new doctrines.

'England is the home, the refuge, of the Reformation, and here it cannot be crushed now,' said Lady Jane Grey, in a tone of triumph. Cecily wished she could feel as confident about this as her friend. She could not but recall what had taken place under Kett, the tanner, only a few months before, and what the chief demands of the Devonshire rebels had been.



CHAPTER VI.

THE PRINCESS MARY.

CECILY TEMPLE renewed some old friendships and made some new ones during that Christmas season, and among the latter was an acquaintance with the Princess Mary. Although many years older than Cecily—for Mary was now in her thirty-fifth year—she was strongly attracted toward Mistress Temple. Perhaps it was her generous sympathy toward those who had suffered so severely through the suppression of the monasteries that attracted the notice of the Princess, for it was not many with whom she formed a friendship, being too much engrossed in bitter reflections on the sorrows of her own life and the cruel injustice from which her mother had suffered. But the distress and misery the poor now endured, and the disgrace and unhappiness of her pious mother, all arose from the same cause, in the belief of the Princess Mary; and who can wonder that she hated the reformed faith with an intensity equalled only by the love she bore her gentle, patient, cruelly oppressed mother? But for this Lutheran heresy her father could never have put away his wife, declaring her to be the dowager Princess of Wales, and herself illegitimate

and incapable of occupying the throne; and the means now being used by her brother's counsellors to induce her to embrace this new faith were not likely to recommend it, and only confirmed Mary in her adherence to the mass. Some of her servants were now in prison for joining her in her attendance at mass, and Mary herself knew not how soon she might share the imprisonment of Gardiner and Bonner, the two popish bishops who were now incarcerated in the Tower.

So few ever ventured to express sympathy with the losing cause now—it was so fashionable to declare one's self a Protestant—that to hear Cecily Temple say she was half ashamed of the name because of the shameful things that were done in it was strange, and the Princess Mary was at once attracted toward her. She may have thought that it only needed a little persuasion to bring Cecily back to the old faith again, and she at once resolved to attempt her conversion, and invited her to spend some weeks with her during the following summer at her residence at Newhall, in Essex, which was only a few miles from Edendale Friary. Cecily accepted the invitation of the Princess, subject to the consent of her father, but it was not until the year 1552 that this promised visit was paid; for Sir Peter Temple did not return from France when Boulogne was given up to the French, and after his return to London so many things occurred to detain him there that Essex was not revisited until the Lady Jane Grey and two or three other friends being invited to a hawking party, Cecily Temple at last found an opportunity of paying her promised visit.

The Princess received her young guests very kindly, and was especially pleased to see Cecily Temple, who she fancied would become an easy convert to the old faith if she could only talk to her quietly, changes from one religion to the other being not infrequent in those days.

But for a few days there was little quiet at New-hall, for the mansion was full of company, and little was heard of but the hawks, dogs, and falcons. Cecily and Lady Jane Grey contrived to get a few moments' conversation sometimes, but the sorrow and disgrace of their dear friends the Seymours occupied most of their thoughts just now; for the Lord Protector, released from the Tower a few weeks after that festive gathering at the Duchess of Suffolk's house, was re-arrested, and early in this year, 1552, was beheaded on Tower Hill.

'I cannot understand how my good cousin could be turned against his uncle by that wily Earl of Warwick, who plotted his destruction that he might rise on his ruin.'

'I pity most the poor Lady Anne, who has wedded the Earl's son; for while she is grieving so sorely for the death of her own dear father, it must seem like a reproach against her husband's father who has been the cause of all her misery,' said Cecily Temple, scarcely restraining her own tears.

'Ah, poor Anne Seymour—Anne Lisle, I mean—she must needs be wary, even in her grief, with such a father-in-law,' said Lady Jane. Little did she think that a more cruel fate than that of her friend Anne Seymour awaited herself through the ambition of their common enemy, or that a single

incident which had occurred the day before would shut the heart of the only friend who could save her from destruction by-and-by.

She related it to her friend, now laughing at the discomfiture of Lady Anne Wharton, one of the Queen's attendants, who was walking with her. 'We were passing a papistic chapel, and as we passed my Lady Anne bowed, and I, looking around thought to see the Princess Mary inside, and I said, "Is her Highness in the chapel?" "No," said Lady Anne, "I make obeisance to Him Who made us all;" and I remembered that the host was suspended above the altar, and I said, "Why, how can that which the baker made be He Who made us all?"'

'O Jane, was not the Lady Anne greatly offended at your bold speech?' asked Cecily Temple.

'Yes; she thought it very profane, I know; but to me it is absurd to call a wafer—a mere piece of bread—the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

'Will the Princess Mary hear of it, do you think? She will not fail to be offended if she should.'

Lady Jane shook her head. 'I cannot help it if she does. I would not be guilty of any disrespect to her Highness; but I cannot bow down to her wafer-god,' she said firmly.

'I wish you had stayed with me, instead of going with Lady Wharton yesterday,' sighed Cecily Temple.

Lady Jane looked at her friend in surprise. 'Why, what can it matter?' she said. 'The "whip

with six strings"—that dreadful Act of Parliament to suppress heresy—is not in force now.'

'No; but still I wish it had not happened. Who would succeed to the throne, do you think, if—?'

'Succeed King Edward? O Cecily, pray do not think of such a thing as King Edward dying!' said Lady Jane quickly. She had heard nothing of the hopes many cherished that she should one day share his throne, but she was very sincerely attached, in a cousinly fashion, to her royal kinsman. They had so many hopes and tastes in common—had shared in the instructions of the same teachers, and read the same books—that it would have been strange if the royal cousins were not attached to each other.

'But—but thinking of it will not cause him to die,' said Cecily Temple.

'But do not wish—I cannot think calmly of such a thing being possible. O Cecily, God would not take the gentle life that is so needful! What would become of our grand English Reformation if King Edward were to die?'

'Then you, too, have thought that the Princess Mary would succeed him,' said Cecily in a whisper.

'Who else could have the right? Many of us might wish that the Princess Elizabeth should come first, but it could not be—it would not be right;' and Lady Jane shook her head sadly.

But at this moment their little *tête-à-tête* was broken in upon by another lady calling upon them to mount their palfreys, as the hawking party were ready to start.

Lady Jane's beautiful face flushed as she recog-

nised the voice of Lady Anne Wharton ; but she had only time to settle her green velvet cap with its dainty plume of white feathers, and spring into the saddle, and the whole party set off with a train of falconers and servants in attendance, each lady carrying on her wrist or shoulder her favourite hawk or falcon.

Cecily Temple, who could not help thinking over Lady Jane Grey's bold sarcastic words about the adoration of the host, soon noticed that the Princess Mary studiously avoided meeting her young cousin ; but toward the close of the day Cecily Temple and the Princess found that they had been left behind by the rest of the party—servants and attendants alike having forgotten their royal mistress in the eagerness of the chase.

‘Do you know anything of this neighbourhood, Cecily?’ asked the Princess. Cecily shook her head. ‘I have never been here before,’ she said, in a little alarm, looking round for some sign of an outlet, some waymark to guide them ; for they seemed to have reached the heart of a wood that only grew more dense as they went on. They tried one path after another, until at last it began to grow dusk, and the Princess said in a tone of desperation, ‘Now, Cecily, follow me : I shall go straight forward ; the wood must end somewhere ;’ and she urged her horse through brake and briar, often at the peril of being thrown off, or the palfrey falling with her to the ground.

After riding on for about an hour their perseverance was rewarded by finding themselves on the outskirts of the wood, and a little beyond a light was shining from the window of a cottage.

'We will go to that house and get some refreshment,' said the Princess, whose horse had become quite lame. It was about dark now, but they found the bridle-path leading to the garden gate, and had soon left their horses there, and were knocking at the door. The house was neither cottage nor mansion, but something between the two, with a comfortable, well-to-do look about it, and a wide, vine-covered, inviting-looking porch.

'I feel sure the people here are hospitable, but we will try them. Do not let them know who we are at first,' said the Princess Mary. Cecily had only time to give a silent assent, for the door was opened by a servant, and a gentleman in the garb of a parish priest came forward to receive the two ladies.

Cecily Temple looked at him for a moment in perplexity, and then exclaimed, 'It is Master Scrope!'

'Yes, I am Martin Scrope; but I do not—'

'You do not remember me,' laughed Cecily; 'where is Dame Mildred, your wife? I wonder whether her memory will not serve her better. But I am forgetting,' she suddenly added; 'Master Scrope, this lady is the Princess Mary, and she is in great need of refreshment, and our horses are at your gate, and also need attention.'

But Mary had drawn back at the mention of Mildred's name, and now said hastily, 'No, no; I can accept nothing here—nothing from a perjured priest, who has sold himself and his God.'

Martin Scrope knew not what to say, and, to add to the dilemma, Mildred had come downstairs with an infant in her arms, and Cecily Temple, despite

her royal friend's anger, at once rushed forward to greet her old friend.

'Go back, Mildred,' said Master Scrope; 'take her upstairs, Mistress Temple, and I will leave the house as soon as I have ordered the servants to prepare some refreshments for this lady.'

But the Princess Mary had retreated to the garden, and could not be persuaded to enter the house again. The most that Master Scrope could do to assist them was to send one servant with them to guide them to the best house in the parish, and another to Newhall, a distance of five miles round by the road, to fetch horses and servants to convey the two ladies home by torch-light.

'Did you know that was the home of a perjured priest?' asked the Princess angrily, after they had left the house.

'I did not know that Master Scrope lived there until he opened the door,' said Cecily with dignity, for she felt greatly annoyed that her friends had been so cruelly hurt and insulted.

'How could you—how dared you enter the house of a priest who has broken his vows, and gone through the mockery of taking a wife?'

'But it was no mockery, your Highness. I saw them married in Edendale parish church three years ago.' Dame Mildred Scrope was a lady of gentle birth and breeding, as well as a most Christian maiden.'

'Oh, I doubt not they have gone through the impious mockery of a marriage, but it is null and void by the laws of the Church, which has never sanctioned this time-serving Parliament of my young

brother, who is but a tool and puppet in the hands of Cranmer and the rest of the so-called bishops.'

Mary was very angry, or she might not have spoken so freely, and Cecily shivered as she thought of that one feeble life upon which hung the destinies of so many happy homes in England. God save King Edward ! might well be the prayer and watchword of hundreds of husbands and wives, for if Mary came to the throne she feared that, if no further persecution was attempted—the marriage of priests certainly would be declared illegal, and all Dame Audley's fears, that she had laughed at before, would become terrible facts !

But Cecily was roused from her sad reverie by their arrival at a substantial farmhouse, where the news of the court ladies being lost and benighted caused no small stir in the quiet homestead. A plain but substantial meal of brown bread, smoked beef and brawn, with small ale and lambs-wool, was soon spread before the ladies, and the Princess ate the coarse food as though she had never been used to more delicate fare, and praised the new-made butter in a way that won all hearts.

Then she asked about the parish priest, Master Scrope, hoping to hear that he gave small attention to his parish beyond exacting the tithes, being too much engrossed with his wife and children, and the worldly concerns that this tie forced upon him.

Never dreaming but that his visitor would be pleased to hear how well the new experiment worked, the farmer said, 'There is not a better ordered parish in the county than this, and we owe it all to godly Master Scrope and his good wife.

Why, 't is the wisest thing that ever was done—this permitting priests to marry. I wasn't taken much with the new order of things at first, for I rented my farms on easier terms under the old abbot than the new lord, and for a long time things seemed at sixes and sevens, as they will be in all changes ; but we are beginning to see that the new way is best after all.'

'But how can that be, when there is none to care for the poor, as in the old times ? Where is the daily dole now ?' asked the Princess sharply.

'Well, I am beginning to see that the daily dole at the monastery gates kept people in idleness and dependence, who ought to work and help themselves. For those who can't work—the sick and the aged—we make provision by a weekly collection of alms in the church, and half the tithes due to the priest are given by Master Scrope for this same purpose.'

'Then how is this woman he calls his wife fed and clothed ?' asked the princess.

'Master Scrope hath a small patrimony of his own,' replied the farmer.

'Ah ! I doubted not the Church had been robbed by this hedge priest. His patrimony ! All that was his became the property of the Church when he entered her service. Ah ! truly have evil days fallen upon us when even priests can do such things,' concluded the Princess with a sigh.

The farmer was too much astonished to answer, and he was not sorry when a convoy of servants, with several knights and ladies in attendance, came to convey his strange guests home by torch-light.



CHAPTER VII.

A MORNING'S DISCUSSION.

THE Princess Mary was as much annoyed about her adventure with Cecily as Mistress Temple herself. She had learned by this time that the young lady was sole heiress of her father, Sir Peter Temple, and the priory of St. Agnes, with all its farms and holdings, was no mean prize to be won back to the Church. She had little doubt but that if she could bring Cecily back to the old faith she could eventually persuade her to restore this property to its rightful owners; so the royal lady distinguished her visitor by many marks of her favour; and when Lady Jane Grey and most of her other guests departed, Cecily was asked to stay a little longer at Newhall, until her father should come to Edendale, when she could join him there.

Of course, Cecily could not refuse, although she longed for the quiet of her own home, and to hear of her old friends, the Audleys, which longing her visit to Martin Scrope's parsonage had greatly increased. She had no idea of the reason why Mary so greatly desired her to prolong her visit, and was somewhat surprised when the Princess invited her

into her cabinet one day, and, closing the door, said, 'Did you ever see a portrait of my mother, Cecily?' and, without waiting for an answer, drew aside a richly embroidered curtain, disclosing a life-size portrait of Catharine of Arragon.

Cecily could not but be struck with the calm majesty of the melancholy face of the fallen Queen, and exclaimed impulsively, 'How could any one be unkind to such a royal lady!'

'Only those inspired by the devil or his emissary Luther,' hissed Mary passionately, for she could never looked upon this portrait of her dead mother unmoved. 'You called her "a royal lady,"' she went on; 'and none more royal ever lived, for she was the daughter of two of the most powerful monarchs of Spain, the mistress of the world, and wife to the greatest King England has ever seen. But she was more than this: she was a saint whose piety few could emulate, and none surpass. Although a queen, surrounded by all the pomp and splendour of a court, she had entered the order of St. Francis, and always wore the coarse dress of a nun under her royal robes.'

'Did she desire to be a nun instead of a queen?' asked Cecily.

'Yes; I doubt not that she earnestly desired the quiet, holy peace of a nun's life, for she knew how hollow and unsatisfying are all the pleasures of the world; and in the midst of the gay life of a court she observed strictly the rules of her order. Saturday and Sunday she fasted, and on the vigils of the Virgin never took more than bread and water. She rose in the middle of the night, winter and summer,

to repeat the customary prayers, and by five o'clock in the morning she was dressed and at prayers again, and six hours were given each day to prayers in the church, she always kneeling on the bare floor, like the poorest nun. Twice a week she made a most perfect confession, never concealing thought or feeling from her confessor. These were her private devotions, but how can I ever hope to show you what her pious teachings and counsels were? After dinner two hours were given to reading the lives of the saints, which she explained by her wise comments, and enforced by her saintly example. Not a few of her maids, privileged to hear them, have greatly profited by them, as well as her most unhappy and sorely bereaved daughter. After this reading, the time was given to prayer until supper, which was always a simple meal. Now, you were with my father's last wife; tell me this, was she such a noble saint as my queenly mother?

'I do not think my royal mistress Catharine ever aspired to be a saint, or desired to be a nun,' said Cecily simply.

'But she was said to be pious. Let me ask whether her piety could be compared to my mother's?'

'My noble mistress always taught us that true piety consisted in a faithful discharge of those duties to which we had been called by God.'

'But did she spend hours upon her knees in church?' persisted Mary.

'I do not think the King would have been pleased if she had. He would have complained that she did not perform her duty as a wife and Queen; for he

was often ailing, and needed careful tendance beyond that which his physicians could give, so that, with this duty to the King, and instructing us, her poor handmaidens, the Queen's time was much occupied.'

'Too much occupied to pray, I doubt not,' said Mary, with something of a sneer.

'No, indeed; my royal mistress could not have lived the pious, gentle life she did; in the midst of so many enemies, had she not been supported by much private prayer. But we were speaking of many hours of each day being spent in church, which Queen Catharine could not have done but by the neglect of some other duties.'

'My sainted mother neglected no duty to God, whatever men may say about her,' said Mary, dropping the curtain before the picture.

'I have always heard that the first Queen Catharine was a most noble and pious lady; and yet my mistress was pious, too, although it may seem in a different fashion.'

'There was a great difference in their religion,' remarked the Princess.

'Yes; the reformed doctrine concerns itself less with rites and ceremonies than with the due and loving performance of all the duties of life,' said Cecily.

'A most worldly religion,' said Mary sullenly.

'I cannot presume to teach your Highness, who is so much wiser; but if you were to study this new faith I think you would see, as my dear mistress often taught us, that it lifts this poor life of ours up to God, instead of severing it from Him as something common and unclean.'

‘How can that be?’ sharply demanded the Princess. ‘How can this Lutheran heresy lift our life nearer to God when it has impiously broken up the convents and monasteries, where holy persons spent their whole lives in His service?’

‘Yes; the monasteries have been broken up, and the poor have suffered through the greed of many who have them now in possession,’ said Cecily with a heightened colour; ‘but did not these religious houses encourage many to be idle, and many more to think that they could not serve God at all except by leaving their worldly calling? My mother died when I was quite a little girl, and the only thing I remember about her was her praying with me once that I might live to serve God, and I thought I must certainly be a nun; and when my father said I must stay and be his little housekeeper, as many of the nuns were to leave their convents and enter the world again, I was in sore trouble, for I thought I could never do as my mother wished—live to God’s service.’

‘And do you think that the religious life—the life of a nun—is not more pleasing to God than any other?’ said the Princess.

‘I may not presume to teach your Highness, but I have learned that even had there been no idleness and luxury and evil living in the convents, still the life of a poor secular woman—a wife caring for her husband and children, or a daughter dwelling with her father—may be as holy, and more in accordance with God’s will, than that of a nun, though she be accounted a saint.’

The Princess looked at Cecily in silent astonish-

ment for a minute or two, but at last she uttered : ' Could presumption go further ? Is it possible that you can think that my stepmother could be compared to my mother in her pious devotion ? She was a good woman, I grant, although a heretic ; but to compare her devotion to the King to my mother's devotion to God is no less than blasphemy. My poor, misguided child, you have been sadly led astray by these heretical teachings, but I am sure you sincerely desire to follow your pious mother's counsel and prayers.'

' I have always desired and endeavoured to do so,' said Cecily quietly.

' I do not doubt it, my child ; but we live in evil times, and you have fallen among dangerous persons who have sadly perverted your pure, simple mind. It was inevitable that your father should call himself by this new and accursed name of Protestant, but that you should learn the detestable doctrine is more than was necessary for his holding the estate.'

Cecily's cheeks flushed indignantly. ' I did not learn, and I do not profess, these new doctrines merely to please my father,' she said.

' My child, I think I understand these matters better than you do,' said the Princess with dignity ; and Mary, who could look every inch a queen in spite of her short stature and rather ill-tempered face, made Cecily feel that she had been guilty of a breach of propriety in thus showing temper in the discussion. Mary's robe of purple velvet swept the floor with some disdain, as she moved to the other side of the room ; but as she had not yet dismissed

Cecily, she did not presume to move, although she wished herself out in the garden, or anywhere rather than where she was.

At length the Princess came back to her seat, bringing an exquisitely illuminated little book in her hand.

'My dear child, you are greatly to be pitied,' she said; 'and I feel the most sincere compassion for you, and for many who, like you, have been led astray from the true fold by the false shepherds who have been preying upon the tender lambs of the flock.'

'But I have heard my father say that it was well known that the priests and monks cared nothing for the flock except the wool they might shear from them,' said Cecily boldly.

'Of course your mind has been filled with evil thoughts against the priests and monks, but I want you to read this little book, and follow its precepts and teachings. Will you promise me this?'

Cecily hesitated for a minute or two. 'I will read it,' she said at last, 'but I cannot promise to follow its precepts unless they accord with the teaching of God's Holy Word.'

'What do you mean?' asked the Princess in some surprise.

'God's Word must be our rule of life, and I cannot promise to follow any precepts until I know whether they accord with the Scriptures.'

'And how can you know that?' asked Mary, in well-feigned surprise.

'I can read; and now, by the King's gracious command, all who can do this may judge for themselves whether a doctrine be of God or of men; for

in all churches there is a Bible chained to the desk, wherein men are invited to read for themselves.'

'Yes; and a most evil and pestilent practice it is,' broke out the Princess. 'Men are taught that they—they, the ignorant, unlearned, common folk—can understand these mysteries for themselves, and they actually dare to use their worldly sense and reason to interpret the word of God.'

'And should it not be so used?' Cecily ventured to ask.

'No, indeed; it is the most daring presumption, and leads to all sorts of mischievous mistakes. It is this reading the Scriptures in the common tongue of the people, and bidding them to read it for themselves, that has led so many to embrace this heresy. Their carnal wisdom is flattered, and they think they can judge what is right and wrong instead of following the judgment of the Church, which alone has the right to decide the meaning of Scripture.'

'But—but since the Scriptures have been translated into English, should we not read them for our instruction and enlightenment?' asked Cecily, hardly knowing what to say, and not wishing to offend the lady further.

'No; we ought to look upon the translating these Scriptures into English as the work of the devil, as in truth it was. Have you never read these words, Cecily, "Resist the devil?"'

'Yes, indeed, but I think—'

'My child, you have no right to judge and put your thoughts into the meaning of Scripture,' interrupted the Princess. 'You ought to fly from the temptation to use your own carnal wisdom in such

holy mysteries, and submit yourself to the teaching of the Church.'

'But if the teaching of Scripture and the practice of the Church are opposed to each other, are we still to follow the Church?' asked Cecily.

'Certainly we are, because it is not given to us to judge what is the meaning of Scripture; and even if it should be that the Church is in error in some matter—not that I say it is, because such a thing is impossible—but even if it were possible, we are still bound to obey, and shall be held blameless, the Church alone being held responsible for all matters concerning our souls, if we will only commit them to her tender care. Now, my child, I hope you will read this little book,' concluded the Princess.

Cecily took the book rather doubtfully. 'I will read it,' she said, 'and remember all that your Highness has said, but I cannot now promise to follow all it may teach.'

'I do not despair of convincing you, Cecily, although you are somewhat obstinate, like most heretics,' said the Princess rising. 'I will see you again after you have read this, and I doubt not you will be in a different frame of mind. Let me see; you do not go to Edendale until next week; so that there will be plenty of time to read the book before you go. When you have read it, bring it to me here about the same hour, and we shall have time to discuss it without interruption.'

Mary dismissed her young guest very kindly, in spite of the differences that had occurred during the discussion, but Cecily felt far from gratified at the distinguished favour that had been accorded her,

and greatly dreaded a second interview with her bigoted hostess. She almost wished that she might lose the book to escape reading it, and could not rest until she had gone to her old nurse, who always accompanied her in all her visits, and told her all that had passed during her interview with the Princess.

Dame Gillian, who was a shrewd, far-seeing old woman, shook her head rather ominously. 'Be cautious, be cautious, my darling; do not you offend her Highness, as my Lady Jane Grey has done in that matter of bowing to the host.'

'If I had only known that I was likely to be drawn into such a discussion I might have had time to think what I ought to say, or, rather, how I ought to speak of these things to her Highness, for I could not really say anything very different after all. I could not say what I do not believe, Gillian.'

'No, I suppose not, for you would not be your mother's child if you did; but still I wish we were safe at home, for these be changeful times, and fashions alter in religion as in everything else, and it don't do to speak too plainly, especially to one like my Lady Mary.'

Her nurse's words were not likely to make Cecily less anxious, more especially when she began to read the book and found that it was intended to set up the teaching and commands of men as above the Word of God; and she hesitated to take it back to the Princess, as she had been invited—dreading the discussion that would follow. Most thankful, therefore, did she feel when, three days before the time arranged for her to go home, a messenger arrived from her father, begging her to return with him at once, as he was unwell and needed her care.



CHAPTER VIII.

SIR PETER TEMPLE.

CECILY felt somewhat like a prisoner escaped from his jailer, when she found herself fairly on the road toward home without having had a second discussion with the Princess. She did not tell her father anything of what had passed, for almost the first words he uttered were, 'I hope you have kept on good terms with the Lady Mary.'

'Oh yes, we are good friends,' answered Cecily; 'but why are you so anxious about it, my father?'

'Who said I was anxious?' exclaimed the irritable knight, who, being confined to his own room by his ailments, was the more peevish and apt to take offence. 'Now, tell me all that has happened at Newhall since you have been there. I am shut up in this room, and not one of these knaves of servants has come near me.'

Cecily smiled as she threw off her hood, and seated herself on a low stool beside her father's couch. 'There have been no fresh rushes laid down here,' she said, kicking aside a little heap of fish-bones that smelt stronger than was pleasant. Bones and other scraps of refuse were scattered all over

the room, but the dogs had picked them pretty clean, and a few fresh rushes would effectually hide them.

Anxious to make her father as comfortable as possible, Cecily ordered some rushes and sweet herbs to be brought at once, and a thick layer to be laid over the room. But when Cecily told them not to cover the offensive smelling fish-bones, but to pick them up and throw them in the yard, her servants wondered what would happen next—what other new-fangled notions she had brought from London. Sir Peter, too, seemed annoyed at the innovation, and exclaimed, ‘I don’t like new fashions, Cecily; if you want fresh rushes, have them; but a few bones underneath can’t do any harm, and it pleases the dogs to scratch them up and pick them over.’

‘Yes, I know it does, but I have left the dry ones for them; but these are offensive, and my Lady Cecil is of opinion that we should not have the plague so often if the bones and dirt were removed whenever fresh rushes were laid upon the floors.’

‘Ah, my Lady Cecil has grown wiser than her mother and father, I should think,’ said Sir Peter, with some asperity. ‘Good bones bring the plague, too! What say the Bishops to such doctrine as this? What think they of Lady Cecil? Why, ’t is little short of blasphemy, when they teach us the judgment of God on the wickedness of the times. Bones bring the plague! I wonder what next,’ reiterated the knight.

Cecily did not venture to continue the discussion any further, for she knew it would be useless; but

she resolved to follow her own will, or, rather, her friend's plan, and have all the old rushes and dirt removed from her own room, instead of having them merely covered with a fresh layer. The servants were indignant when they received this command from the young lady. Such a waste of good rushes was never heard of. Why, it would take almost a cart-load to have a good thick layer put down again. They grumbled, and they hoped to hear it would be impossible to have so many as would be necessary to do this. But Hodge Watkins, who heard who it was that wanted the rushes, said at once that he would get them; for it was to Mistress Cecily that he owed it he was now her father's hired servant, and not his slave; and it was to her his mother had to be thankful for the little cottage Sir Peter's bailiff had found for her accommodation. These arrangements had been made by Cecily without her father's knowledge, for he had left her sole mistress when he went to France; and so she had written these directions to her steward, especially mentioning that Hodge Watkins should be helped and protected if ever he returned from his foolish expedition into Norfolk.

Poor Hodge had found that the new reformation set on foot by Kett was worse than foolish, and at the first appearance of the King's troops he had laid down his arms, for he had already grown tired of robbing honest farmers and burning down the houses of gentlemen for mere sport. So Hodge had returned, looking rather shamefaced, and only venturing to show himself to Master Audley at first; but he had good news for him, for Cecily's letter had arrived, bidding her steward find a cottage for

Hodge and his mother. In his gratitude he had gone back there to receive whatever punishment his master had decreed ; but he heard that the lady who had shown such regard for his mother had also ordered that work should be found for him, and wages paid for it, too ; and ever since that time he had longed for an opportunity of showing his gratitude to his young mistress.

Rushes were not very plentiful just now, but he resolved that Cecily should have a good supply for her room, if he went begging through half the county. Of course Master Audley was the first to whom he applied. 'Mistress Cecily has come home and needs fresh rushes for the chambers ; can you give me a few, sir ?' asked Hodge.

'So the young lady has come home at last, has she ?' said Master Audley ; 'she has been staying at Newhall with some other court ladies, I hear.'

Master Audley loved a gossip, and hoped to hear some London news from Hodge, but the man was too eager about the rushes to tell anything just now. Dame Audley, who was standing in the porch, was more impatient than her husband. 'Hodge, you tell Mistress Cecily not to forget her old friends at the manor-house. Tell her, too, that Kate is here, and Mildred is coming to-morrow to bring her children to see their aunt and cousins.'

Hodge went back with his rushes and the invitation, delivering the latter to Dame Gillian, who promised to tell her young lady as soon as she left her father's chamber, for as yet Sir Peter would not allow her to leave him ; and Dame Gillian sighed as she thought of the life poor Cecily would lead

while her father continued so ailing, for the old woman feared that this would be no slight attack, but might last for months, or even years. Perhaps there was a little selfishness in Dame Gillian's sigh, for she knew that it would be very little she would see of her young lady now; and the maids, too, would have cause to be sorry, for Gillian, unable to read, and so to pass the time away, would look closer after them than they thought either needful or pleasant.

Cecily's face brightened when she received Dame Audley's message. 'I must go down and see them to-morrow. I am longing to see poor Mildred Scrope again. Will you see that they hang the tapestry in my room?' she added, as her father's voice was heard calling her.

'What did you want to run away for just as I was telling you how my Lord Warwick was made Duke of Northumberland?' he asked petulantly when Cecily went back.

'I did but speak to Gillian about the tapestry to be hung in my room,' said Cecily, as she took her seat to listen to the well-known story of the Duke's perfidy and ambition. She had heard the same tale again and again, for he had been created Duke of Northumberland before his rival was beheaded, although she and the Lady Jane Grey, and a few others who were strongly attached to the Seymours, refused to speak of him by his new title.

'Well, yes, I suppose you did know that; but have you heard that your friend, Lady Jane, is to break her engagement with the Earl of Hereford?'

'I don't believe it,' impulsively spoke Cecily.

‘Of course I know that many are greatly disappointed at this talk about the King marrying the French princess, for her mother, Queen Catharine Medicis, is no friend to the reformed opinions in France, and ’t is feared King Edward may show them less favour by-and-by with a Catholic wife.’

‘Ah, depend upon it, the old faith will come in fashion again,’ said Sir Peter; ‘but you know this, my wench, that I hold these lands in payment of a just debt. I served in the King’s wars for years—the late King’s, I mean—and he had naught to pay me with but these convent lands. Some have had as good for no service at all, and a certain scullion had broad acres and goodly fields for making the King a plum pudding. But mine was for true and loyal service, and when men began to prate of the King’s “gift” I had it set down in the parchment conveying it to me that it was for service rendered, and in discharge of the debt the King owed me; so that whatever be the changes of religion I shall hold to the land.’

‘But I hope there will be no change,’ said Cecily faintly.

‘So do I, for it’s convenient to call myself a Protestant—stops these priests’ mouths, who would for ever be teasing me to restore this property I hold to the use of the Church. But never fear, Cecily; whatever changes there may be, they won’t attempt to touch the Church lands, for so many have them in possession now, and everybody will hold on to them, although they will let these new-fangled notions sink if they will, and all become good Catholics again.’

Cecily shivered. 'Do you really think if there came to be another change in religion people would give up these new doctrines?' she asked.

Sir Peter stared at the question. 'Men are not fools,' he said; 'religion is all very well in its way, although I never could see the need there was to make such a fuss about it as some folks do. But then, I am an old soldier, not a priest or a bishop, and so I have nothing to do with religion.'

'O father, do you not know that God has made every man and calls every man to be His servant, to embrace eternal life, which He has given in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ?' said Cecily, in a low earnest tone. It was not often that she dared to speak to her father upon this theme of religion at all, but she had often prayed that she might be able to speak a word to him upon his own personal need of salvation. Even now that the opportunity had come it seemed that she had not the courage to embrace it as she ought to have done.

The knight waited for a minute, and then said, 'Do you mean that every man has got to look after this affair for himself?'

'Yes, father, indeed; this is the only right way, for God will not have any to come between our souls and Him.'

'Do you mean to say, we have got all the business to do ourselves—this taking eternal life, whatever that may mean?'

'Yes, father; no priest or saint can do it for us,' said Cecily with rising courage. 'The sins we have committed must be—'

'Then I tell you this, wench; if that is what

the new doctrines teach, they 'll soon go down. It is preposterous to think that men will have such a religion as this. I 've heard people grumble about having to pray and pay too, and I don't wonder at it. No, no; this won't suit men at all. The old way was the best, after all, and will come in fashion again too, I doubt not.'

'I hope not,' said Cecily fervently.

'Hope not! Why, who can be taken up with such an unreasonable religion as this? Look at me, now. I've been in all the King's wars, and fought his battles: what do I know about this soul-saving business? That's a priest's work, and the old religion was this: I could send for a priest just before I died, and make a bargain with him as to how much I must give the Church for him to shrive me and make things straight with the Virgin and saints, so that I should get let into heaven at last.'

'O my father, how can you think that is how God desires to save us?' said Cecily.

'Well, it is the most sensible way. What do I know about God or my soul? If they were like pikes, or cross-bows, or anything I've been used to in the world, I could understand it; but talk to a man like me about his soul, and I'm all in a maze. No, no; give me the old religion, for that'll suit me best. I can pay a priest to do the business for me, and that'll save all the troubles and blunders I should make over it. What! crying, wench?—art afraid I shall give up all the land to the Church again, and leave you without a silver groat? No, no; leave thy old father alone; he is a match for any priest; he'll make a good bargain, and save his soul, too?'

‘But indeed no man can save his soul in the way you think, my father; and the priests did but deceive men for the sake of gain when they taught them that this was the way of salvation,’ said Cecily, scarcely restraining her sobs as she spoke.

Her father looked at her in some surprise. ‘You and my Lady Cecil have both set up as knowing more than the old priests,’ he said sharply.

‘We know they deceived the people, teaching the inventions of men instead of the Word of God,’ said Cecily boldly.

‘Ah, I see you want to keep the priests away from me. Well, well, I don’t blame you, for there is no gainsaying it—many a wench like you has been robbed by these same priests of all she ought to possess, and was glad to live as a humble nun in the house she ought to have ruled as a mistress; but I tell you, wench, your father will make a better bargain than that, or else let the business alone.’

‘O father, father! do you think that if giving up all we possess would save you I should grudge it? O father, you ought to know your Cecily better. Believe me, I would gladly give up all these acres, which I know you have earned from the King’s Grace, and go back to live in the little cottage where I was born, if I could see you caring for the things of God—trying to serve and love Him, not for the sake of gaining heaven, but because of the great love He has manifested to us in the gift of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.’

Sir Peter Temple was certainly touched by his daughter’s earnestness, and he knew her self-forgetting love too well to doubt its sincerity. ‘You

are a strange wench, Cecily.' He said the words with a touch of pride and tenderness in the tone that encouraged his daughter to venture a little further.

'I know you love me, my father, and you have always been kind and tender toward me, and sought to promote my happiness before all things.'

Sir Peter smiled and stroked the fair forehead. 'I may have wished you was a boy sometimes, Cecily, for the sake of the land and the old name, but I've loved you all the same—God knows I've loved you, wench.'

'Yes, my father, He does; and He put this love into your heart that you might understand something of the love He bears toward you.'

'What—what are you saying, Cecily? Surely you have gone mad, or are dreaming. Wake up, wake up! old Peter Temple is the old soldier still; he is no monk or priest; what are you saying about God caring for such as he?'

'My father, God does care for you, and loves you,' said Cecily solemnly; 'He has been watching over you, saving you from death, that you may learn to love Him before this life is over.'

'What! do you mean to say that the narrow escapes I have had in the battlefield and other places was God saving my life—because He cared for me?'

'Yes, because He loved you and desired you to believe in this love—even the love that not only saved you from death, but gave His Son to die that you might be saved through Him.'

Cecily forgot her timidity now in the joy she felt

at seeing her father willing to listen to her, and she went on to speak of the one perfect sacrifice for sin made by Jesus Christ, so that the Roman sacrifice of the mass was not only needless, but a hiding of the great truth of the Gospel.

Sir Peter listened with the greatest attention, and at last exclaimed : ‘ Cecily, I must hear more about this. I must find out for myself whether you are speaking the very truth, or only a fable invented by our clever Archbishop Cranmer.’





CHAPTER IX.

ANTICIPATIONS OF SORROW.

CECILY contrived to leave her father for an hour the next day, to go and see her friends, the Audleys. She was most anxious to see Mildred, for she did not know whether Dame Audley had heard of her impromptu visit to the Scropes, and her curiosity would be so great to hear what the Princess had said and done that, unless she was to be told all that had happened, it was best that she should not hear of it.

Dame Kate Goodman, with her two bonnie boys looked so happy and content now, that it was easy to see she had forgotten all the old scruples about the legality of her marriage; but Cecily fancied that a change had come over Mildred since she had seen her a short time before. There was a troubled, anxious look, which was the more apparent to Cecily from the evident efforts she made to conceal it. Dame Audley had noticed it, too, for she said to Cecily, 'Mildred is not well; she concerns herself too much with Martin's parish troubles, I know.'

'No, no, it is not that, mother, but—Martin has

some news for you,' she said hastily; 'he has been asked to take charge of a London parish.'

'But he won't do it; surely he won't think of taking you and the children to London, where you would die of the plague or sweating sickness in less than a year.'

Mildred smiled at her mother's exaggerated fears. 'I dare say we shall be quite well in London,' she said, 'and there are reasons why Martin thinks he ought to go. Bishop Ridley, who has made him the offer of this living, and very much wishes him to accept it, says that they greatly need devout, earnest men in London, who are able and willing to teach the people the difference between the old faith and the new; for in many parishes the Book of Common Prayer has been substituted for the mass book, but the people know little beyond this of the great difference between the old way of thinking and the reformed doctrine; and it is difficult to get men to do this, for many of the priests who have conformed have done so only in outward seeming, and mumble out the prayers so that their English is no more understood than the Latin was.'

'Well, that is all very well for my lord the bishop to say, but he ought to know that when a priest marries a wife he, like another man, must think of her happiness somewhat,' said Dame Audley.

'But, mother, you would not have Martin turn coward, or refuse to accept a call to greater usefulness because of me and the children?' said Mildred.

‘Well, I don’t know. I’m sure a man ought to take care of his wife,’ said her mother.

‘Well, I am sure Martin has taken good care of me, as you well know, mother. But the question seems to be this—and I had thought of it before I married—Martin’s first duty is to God, and afterward to me; and if it is impossible for a priest to reconcile his duty to God, and his duty to his wife, then the old arguments are correct, and priests ought not to marry.’

‘They certainly ought to be careful whom they marry,’ remarked Cecily, who dreaded to say too much for fear of offending Dame Audley.

When she rose to leave, Mildred said she would walk with her; and as soon as they were by themselves she said, ‘Mistress Temple, have you told my mother of the Princess Mary coming to our house?’

‘No, indeed; I did but return from Newhall the day before yesterday, and have not seen Dame Audley until now.’

‘Then do not tell her—keep it a secret, will you Cecily? for it will trouble her more than our leaving Essex.’

‘But why are you leaving?’ asked Cecily. ‘I think it is a pity you are going to London; for we heard you were so much beloved, had done so much good in the parish, and now it may be it will all be undone. I do not think it is fair to take all the good men from the country. Men have souls to save here as well as in the great city.’

‘You heard we had been useful?’ said Mildred with a faint smile.

‘Yes, indeed; the farmer could talk of nothing

but your goodness, and how much better it was for the parish for the priest to be a married man.'

'Did the Princess Mary hear this, too?' asked Mildred anxiously.

'Yes; and I was very glad she did.'

'But did she let the farmer know anything of what she thought of the matter?' interrupted Mildred.

'Yes, and very much astonished the good man looked; but—'

'Then, Cecily, I can understand how our troubles have arisen. Since the night you and the Princess Mary came we have had nothing but trouble and opposition from people who used to be our best friends in the parish; and since the news came that the young King could not live long things have been worse, until one day last week they told Martin he had better give up the living, or send me away, as they did not care about having a married priest;' and poor Mildred burst into tears as she spoke.

'Hush, hush, dear; I feel inclined to laugh at such a foolish speech. Put you away, indeed—you, his lawfully married wife! Why, Martin could not do it even if he wished; and as for giving up the living—'

'That must be done,' said Mildred, hastily drying her eyes. 'We can do no good now, for all the old prejudices of the people are aroused, and there are always plenty of wandering monks coming and going to keep up this opposition against us. No, Cecily, we must go to London, where we have heard that many priests are now married.'

‘Yes, priests and bishops, too. The Archbishop himself is a married man, you know, Mildred, so that it does seem very foolish of these people.’

‘I am glad you have not been won over to the old superstition again, Cecily. We heard that the Princess Mary was determined to bring you back.’

‘Who could have told you that?’ exclaimed Cecily, flushing as she thought of the discussion they had had.

‘It came from my Lady Wharton, I believe,’ said Mildred; and then she added, ‘You must be careful not to offend that lady.’

‘I hate her,’ exclaimed Cecily impulsively. ‘She has set the Princess against her sweet young cousin, the Lady Jane Grey, by her tale-bearing of what the Lady Jane said in the chapel concerning the host.’

‘Yes, I have heard that story,’ said Mildred.

‘You have! Who can be the tale-bearer? I thought it was only known to the Princess and me. Lady Jane told me of it, and we soon had good reason for knowing that the Princess had been told, too, for she scarce spoke to Lady Jane afterward.’

‘Yes, that is known also; and ’t is whispered that if she should ever come to the throne she will bring back the old religion at once,’ said Mildred with a sigh. What mercy would be shown to her and hundreds like her who had dared to marry priests, she knew only too well, and she grew almost sick at the thought.

‘But, Mildred, is it right to fret like this over troubles that may never come?’ asked her friend,

when she had listened to the story of the anxious fears that constantly oppressed her now.

‘How can I help being fearful and anxious when I think of my dear children, and what a fate may be in store for them?’ sobbed Mildred.

‘O Mildred, does not your love for your little ones teach you something of the tender love God has for you? Are you not His child? and do you think He cares nothing for this, or will not help you, if ever the time comes that you will need His help in this matter? Do try and pray that you may be able to trust Him for the future as implicitly as your little ones trust to you.’

‘O Cecily, I am afraid I am very faithless, but you do not know what it is to be a mother.’

‘No, I do not; but let me ask if you would not be grieved if one of your children began fretting and complaining about this same trouble? Would you not feel hurt that the little one did not trust you to take care of her, and shield her from harm? And yet her grief would be more reasonable than ours; for we know that God is both willing and able to give us all that we need, either to escape or to endure the trial.’ Then Cecily burst into tears scarcely less sorrowful than Mildred’s as she said, ‘I—I am trying to learn this myself, but oh, I do feel it must be harder for you to trust for your little children than for me to trust for my friends!’

It was Mildred’s turn to comfort now, and, drying her eyes, she whispered, ‘I will think of what you say, Cecily; I ought not to be so faithless and fretful, for Martin is often telling me that God does

not give the grace needed until the trial comes ; but when it comes the grace is sure to come with it.'

'Yes, I know ; I heard the same thing in a sermon preached at Paul's Cross,' said Cecily, choking back her tears ; 'and yet it seems as though we must borrow the trouble of to-morrow to burden to-day with. Since I have been at New-hall I have been full of anxious forebodings about what would happen to this one and that one among my dearest friends—friends whom I love as sisters—if the King should die and the Princess Mary be proclaimed Queen.'

'And she would be,' said Mildred quickly.

'I know that most people think the same ; and yet—and yet it seems too dreadful ! I cannot bear to think of it !—I will not believe that God means to overturn our glorious Reformation, and hand us over, bound hand and foot, to Rome.' Cecily spoke with scarcely less passion than Mildred had done. To Mildred the Reformation meant the welfare of her husband and children ; to Cecily it was the well-being of many dear friends, as well as the enlightenment and blessing of the whole country ; but both felt deeply, and were alike struggling against that 'thought for the morrow' which would deprive them of present peace and unfit them to meet future trials should they come.

They had almost reached the end of the fields through which their walk lay, and Cecily could see the priory gates when she turned to say good-bye to Mildred. Just then a man mounted on a jaded, weary looking horse passed along the road, and Cecily said, 'He looks like a messenger from Lon-

don ; his clothes are dusty and travel-stained, as though he had ridden many miles to-day.'

In a moment Mildred grew as white as the handkerchief she had thrown over her head. 'O Cecily, it may be a messenger sent privately to your father, telling him of the King's death. If it should be, will you send and let me know at once. Give us warning, and I think I could persuade Martin to take us out of the country, or hide us somewhere for a time.'

'Hush, hush, Mildred ; you are too fearful. But I promise you this, now and for any future time : should it ever come to pass that warning is needful, and I can give it, believe me, I will spare no pains to help or protect you.'

'O thank you, thank you a thousand times,' said Mildred ; and once more the friends embraced as sisters, and then Cecily went on toward home, while Mildred stood waiting to see whether the dusty traveller stopped at the priory gates.

When she saw him dismount from his horse, and blow the great horn that hung beside the postern, her heart almost stood still with affright, and she walked slowly homeward, almost expecting to hear one of the servants or Cecily herself running after her to bring the terrible news that the King was dead. But the day passed on, no warning came, and Mildred grew more calm, and even succeeded in putting on an air of cheerfulness in the presence of her mother and sister ; for why should she burden them with her anxious fears ? Then in the evening Martin came, for her father wished to have all his children about him once more, and in

the cheerful household talk Mildred forgot her fears for a time.

Meanwhile Cecily had reached home through a little private door before the messenger had sounded the horn at the gate, and so was able to announce his coming to her father.

‘A messenger from London? Then Northumberland is making another move—unless the King is dead,’ said Sir Peter.

‘May I stay and know what is the news he brings?’ asked Cecily, with paling cheeks.

‘Yes, child; you may hear whether the matter concerns you or not. It may be some message from the Council, or—but here come the letters,’ he exclaimed, as a servant appeared, bearing a bulky packet tied with a ribbon, and bearing Sir William Cecil’s seal.

Sir Peter broke the seal, and found that the packet contained several letters to himself and Cecily. Letters were not so common in those days that two could be received without sundry exclamations of wondering surprise; and just now, Cecily’s mind being full of vague fears, she broke the seal of Lady Cecil’s with trembling fingers, half fearing to read the contents. But after the usual compliments and questions and assurance about health, came various little items of news concerning their common friends, among them a confirmation of the news brought from London by her father, that the Lady Jane Grey’s engagement with the son of the late Protector had been broken off, and it was believed through the Duke of Northumberland, who was all powerful with the King now.

Cecily threw her letter down in impatient disgust as she read this. 'I would I were the Lady Jane!' she said aloud.

'Odds bodkins! what next? what ails you, Cecily? is there ill news in your letter?'

'Yes, ill enough; my Lord of Northumberland has some designs upon the Lady Jane Grey, I fear; for Mildred Cecil tells me that her betrothment to the Earl of Hereford is at an end, and it is the town talk that my Lord Northumberland has had the doing of it.'

'Ah, like enough, like enough! I should not wonder if we heard next that she was betrothed to one of his own sons.'

'But why should he wish this?' asked Cecily. 'I know there are few ladies to compare with the Lady Jane either for piety or learning; but I don't believe the Duke cares enough about these things to think of them as a fair inheritance for his son. No, no; it is for something else my Lady Jane is chosen, if she be chosen, to be the wife of my Lord Guildford Dudley.'

'Be careful, Cecily, what you say before the knaves and wenches, for servants will prate of things that concern them not, and it is by no means certain yet that my Lady Jane is to marry a Dudley.'

'I will be careful,' said Cecily; 'but tell me now, my father, what you think the wily Duke can mean by this—if he has done it? Lady Jane is one of my dearest friends, and I should be sorely grieved if she fell into the Duke's power, for I hate him.'

'Hush, hush, my wench! you have soon forgotten your caution. Don't you make an enemy of

the great Duke ; for I am told in one of my letters it is better to offend the King and all the Council than give offence to his Grace of Northumberland.'

'But we are alone, my father ; surely I may speak to you without fear ; and I do feel angry—angry and fearful—for the Lady Jane, and I cannot conceive why the Duke should interfere with her and Hereford.'

'Well, I have heard a whisper ; but I cannot think the Duke, ambitious as he is, would attempt such a thing as that.'

'What would he not attempt, after his murder of the Duke of Somerset ?' said Cecily indignantly. 'Tell me what it is you fear, my father,' she whispered.

'I don't fear it—I can't believe it ; but it began to be whispered that the Duke would persuade the young King to have an Act of Parliament passed, or to make a will, as though he had no sisters living.'

'And if he did, what then ?' asked Cecily.

'What then!—why, the crown descends to Lady Jane Grey ; and this is why it is the Duke professes such a zeal for these new opinions. These hot Gospellers had a pet scheme for marrying Jane to King Edward ; but since this has fallen through, and the King's health has failed, Northumberland thinks of making her Queen, knowing that the Protestants will favour it.'

But Cecily shook her head doubtfully. 'I don't know that. If it could be without being wrong ; but it can't—it can't be ; it would not be right.'



CHAPTER X.

A FRIENDLY OFFER.

THE Scropes went to London, and Martin was so fortunate as to find a suitable house in Oldgate, near the conduit, and close to the city gate, so that they would have the benefit of the fresh country breezes from Whitechapel. Their house overlooked the convent garden of the Minories, too, so that Mildred could almost have fancied she was in the country again, but for the stir and bustle that were constantly going on in the streets. This had almost bewildered her at first, but she soon grew accustomed to it, and after a time would not have changed her new surroundings for the old.

Martin was always busy, for here in London people were more anxious to learn and judge of things for themselves, and less disposed to think that the priest had to do this for them. Here, also, where the Reformation had become most fashionable because it was the only road open to preferment, Mildred soon lost her fear of the old superstition becoming the religion of the land again, and here, too, there were numbers of married priests; so that her position altogether seemed

more secure than it had done in the country. The months, as they passed on, brought greater peace to Mildred, and Cecily sometimes heard from Dame Audley, sometimes through a letter to herself, of their happy, busy London life. These letters from Mildred came by the messenger who brought Sir Peter's, and it puzzled Cecily not a little—this constant passing of letters between her father and one or two members of the Council.

In the spring of the year 1553 Sir Peter talked of going to London for a long stay. His health was better, and he began to grow tired of the quiet and monotony of a country life. He would take Cecily with him. She was busy one afternoon looking over her wardrobe with her nurse Gillian, deciding what dresses she would take with her, when her father's voice was heard calling her, and Cecily, with an exclamation of impatience, went to see what he wanted.

'Here, Cecily, that knave of a messenger who came from London a fortnight ago brought this letter for you. I forgot all about it when you came home from the Audleys, but I don't suppose the business it contains is of much importance—it will do as well now as then.'

Cecily felt rather vexed at the detention of her letter, but she dared not say a word, and carried it up to her own room in silence. In a few minutes she came flying downstairs again, almost breathless with excitement.

'Father! father! they have married Lady Jane to Lord Guildford Dudley! Did you know it?' panted Cecily, fairly gasping for breath.





HORGE DOFFED HIS CAP TO THE YOUNG LADY.—See page 105.

'Eh—they've done it then?' said Sir Peter, forgetting that Cecily's letter had been lying in his drawer for a fortnight.

'It must be by this time. O father, I am so sorry you forgot this letter, for Lady Jane has written herself to ask me to go to the wedding; and now it is all over—over a week ago,' sighed poor Cecily, who could hardly restrain her tears.

'So she asked you to go and see her sacrifice herself, did she? Well, poor young thing! I'd do anything to pleasure her, but I could not have let you do that, Cecily; so it is as well you did not have your letter sooner,' said Sir Peter, turning to his papers again.

Cecily looked keenly at her father. Had he kept this letter back purposely? She was afraid to ask, and yet she felt bitterly disappointed. She could not go back to Gillian and the inspection of her wardrobe now. She did not want to go to London at all, and snatching her garden hat from its peg, she went out of doors.

Hodge Watkins was working near, and doffed his cap to the young lady. Cecily nodded, and with her usual pleasant smile passed on, but turned back the next minute, to ask after his mother.

'She be about the same; the pains keeps her fast to the chair still.'

'Then she is sure to be at home?' said Cecily. 'Hodge, if my father asks for me, tell him I am gone to carry your mother herb-tea and other matters;' and Cecily went round to the kitchen to get these 'other matters,' which Hodge knew meant

a savoury meal for his mother from his master's own table.

He stood leaning on his spade, looking after the young lady, and musing half aloud: 'She'd be a credit to any religion, and I'll never believe the saints or Virgin would turn their back upon her. Why she's a saint herself, heretic though she be, and I don't care if Father Ambrose hear me say it. He may say what he likes 'gainst these new opinions that's come and upset the country; but I'll hear nought 'gainst Mistress Cecily or any Protestant like her. Where should we have been—mother and I—if it hadn't been for her? and not a bit of difference has it made that we still hold to the old faith. She'll take the old mass-book and read bits out of it to mother, and then turn them into English, because she says we ought to understand what the Latin means. Well, she may be right or she may be wrong about this, but anyhow mother says it does her good to hear her read the prayers from the mass-book; for she reads 'em as though she understood 'em and felt 'em, specially when she says the Paternoster in English.' Hodge often talked to himself in this strain, and he had sometimes been overheard by his fellow-servants, who laughed at him for his devotion to the 'gentry,' who called themselves Protestants that they might swallow up all that had belonged to the Church. But Hodge cared little for these gibes. Cecily, who had heard something of it, too, felt that in Hodge she possessed a true and faithful servant, who would risk much in her behalf, and valued him accordingly.

But this visit to the Widow Watkins was not for

her benefit alone. She felt sure her father was hiding something from her—something that concerned her friend Lady Jane, and if this was of any public interest the messenger would certainly have brought the news from London and reported it to the servants ; for Sir Peter's servants had grown to be important people lately, on the strength of the 'London news' and 'court news' which they extracted from the messenger when he brought the knight's letters. This gossip was always carried to the Widow Watkins, and Cecily had little doubt but that she would hear what had been the latest talk among the Londoners when the messenger left town.

But it seemed there was little of importance, for the widow had heard little or nothing beyond what Cecily knew already; and yet she felt convinced that there was something on foot—something in which her father took a great interest, too; and she was confirmed in these suppositions when, a day or two later, her father suddenly announced that he had changed his mind about going to London—he did not mean to go now. A week later, and a horseman arrived, wearing the livery of the Princess Mary, and Cecily ran downstairs, expecting and yet fearing that he had brought another invitation for her to visit Newhall. But she heard, to her surprise, that the letter was for her father, and that the messenger was waiting for the answer. The next day Sir Peter Temple rode to Kenninghall, where the Princess Mary was staying, which set Cecily wondering more than ever, and she was vaguely uneasy at the messengers passing to and fro between Kenninghall and London.

At length came the startling news that the King was worse, and could not live more than a few weeks or months, but that the kingdom should not again become papist. He had secured the Protestant succession to the throne by appointing the Lady Jane Dudley to succeed him.

Cecily stood almost aghast as she heard the news. 'Queen Jane!' she murmured; 'my dear friend, only seventeen—only a girl-bride a month ago, expecting to be called Queen Jane;' and a thrill of triumphant joy crept over Cecily, only to be succeeded, however, by a sudden feeling of apprehension. Could the Reformation be helped by this—this wrong done to the King's two sisters? Cecily thought with a shudder of what might be expected to follow if the Princess Mary came to the throne; and yet—and yet, was it right to do evil that good might come? True, the evil might be legalised by Act of Parliament and letters patent, but this might not mend the matter much; and Cecily was very much afraid that the majority of the people would look upon the gentle Queen Jane as a usurper.

It seemed strange, too, that her father had said nothing to her about these impending changes. He had left home and had gone to Norwich as soon as the messenger brought these tidings from London, and Gillian told her he was working in the interest of the Princess Mary; and so it seemed, for the next thing they heard was that the Princess had left Kenninghall, and taken up her abode at Norwich Castle, where Sir Peter Temple, and several other knights from the neighbourhood, were also staying. Poor Cecily knew not what to do; whether to go to

London and warn her friends, or to wait and see what coming events would bring. It was useless to alarm them needlessly; and perhaps after all the King had the right to appoint his successor, and if so, who could fill the throne better than Lady Jane?’

So Cecily mused as she paced up and down the garden heedless of the servants’ curious looks and Hodge’s anxious glances. At last, after watching Cecily for a day or two, and noticing that she did not go near Master Audley’s, Hodge made up his mind to speak to the young lady himself. He had been reeve to the monastery once, he argued—no mean post—and, therefore, in the right that this old honour gave him, he would venture to say a word to the young lady.

Hodge had spoken to her before, it is true, but it had always been in answer to some question or remark of hers; but now she did not seem to notice any of the traps he laid for her to speak, and so it was with an awkward shyness that almost set Cecily laughing that Hodge placed himself in her way, and said, ‘I was reeve once, Mistress Cecily—reeve to the old friar here, and I’ve been to London for him, too.’

‘Have you?’ said Cecily smiling; ‘well, I hope you don’t want to go there again just now, for things are uncertain, and there is no telling what may happen if—if the King dies,’ said Cecily, with a shiver.

‘That’s just what I’ve been thinking, Mistress Cecily; things be uncertain like, and you’ve many friends in London, I know, and—and the Princess Mary is sure to be made Queen; and—’

‘But this is by no means certain, Hodge,’ interrupted Cecily. ‘Have you not heard the news that King Edward’s cousin, the Lady Jane Grey, is to succeed him?’

‘Ay, ay, I’ve heard that story—it’s she that married Northumberland’s son a week or two ago. It’s well known now why that marriage took place; but I tell you, Mistress Cecily, that the people won’t have a Queen that’s got no more right to the throne than that girl. Essex and Suffolk and Norfolk—they’ll all rise for the Princess Mary and the old religion.’

‘They rose before for Kett, the tanner, and the old religion, which they called the New Reformation. The rebellion will be put down. Essex is not England,’ said Cecily, trying to hide how much Hodge’s words had disturbed her.

But the faithful fellow was too watchful and too anxious not to detect it. ‘Well, we shall see whether Northumberland gets made King, for that’s what the Queen Jane’s cry means. But it was not that I came to speak to you about. Mistress Cecily, you were my friend when I had no one in the world to help me; you helped me and my mother, too, and if laying down my life would serve you, I’d be glad to do it.’

Cecily stared at him in surprise.

‘What do you mean, Hodge?’ she said.

‘Well, Mistress Cecily, I can see that you are anxious like, and no doubt it’s for the friends in London. Sir Peter, now, like a wise man, though he calls himself a Protestant, is going to declare for the Princess Mary, but many will be drawn

into shouting and throwing caps for this stranger-girl.'

'Hodge, how dare you speak of the Lady Jane as a "stranger-girl?" She is of the blood royal, and the purest, noblest, sweetest woman in England,' exclaimed Cecily.

'You may be that same, too, Mistress Cecily, and I'd lay down my life to serve you, for the good friend you've been to my mother; ay, I'd lay down my life, but I'd not shout or throw my cap for you to be queen.'

'You are not likely to be asked,' said Cecily smiling. 'The Lady Jane is one of the royal family, I tell you.'

'Ah! but not the King's sister. Mistress Cecily, let me say what I came to say, and be back to my work, for the knaves and wenches will be wondering why I talk to you. I've seen changes—ah, sorry, sorry changes—and another is coming; and there's never a change but it brings sorrow to some, and if the Lady Mary is made queen it is easy to tell who will go down with that turn of the wheel. It will be you and your friends of the new religion. Mistress Cecily, I've thought of it—thought my time would come soon when I could serve you, and I ask you now to let me—to use me for anything you need. I've been the reeve, you know, and I've been to London, so that I can be trusted as a helpful body.'

Cecily looked at the man, hardly knowing how to answer him. 'I am sure I can trust you, Hodge,' she managed to say at last; 'but I—I hope I shall not need the service you offer.'

‘But you may. In these changing times no one can tell what a day may bring; and if you should be in danger, or have a wish to send a warning to your friends,’ he whispered, ‘I would be a trusty messenger.’

‘Thank you! thank you, Hodge. As you say, we know not what may happen, and if I should need a trusty messenger to send to my father, or—or to my friends, I will certainly send you.’

‘Any knave could go to Sir Peter,’ said Hodge; ‘but I doubt if messengers to London could always go in safety, if all the whispers I’ve heard be true.’

‘Thank you for the warning. I will think of what you have said;’ and Cecily turned to resume her walk, more disturbed than ever by what she had just heard.

Was it true that the eastern counties were rising to assert the rights of the Princess Mary to the throne? and did her friends in London know of this? Doubtless the Londoners would shout and throw caps for Queen Jane, and the bishops would preach powerful sermons on her behalf at Paul’s Cross, where she would be proclaimed Queen; but, unfortunately, London was not the whole of England, and Englishmen had an obstinate way of asking themselves what was right in the matter of the royal succession, without much regard as to what would follow afterward. If the choice of a ruler lay entirely in their own hands, and the question had to be decided whether the succession to the throne should be decided on Papist or Protestant grounds—if the two royal ladies concerned had to stand entirely on their own merits as to their occupation

of the throne—there was little doubt that Lady Jane would have been chosen ; but as it was, Cecily could not but feel that, in assuming the royal state, her dear friend would be usurping the place of another.

Then if the Duke of Northumberland was sincere in wishing to preserve the kingdom from popery, why had the young Princess Elizabeth been passed over ? She had been educated in the Protestant faith, and was as firm in her adherence to it as Lady Jane Grey. But, think of it as she would, Cecily only grew more troubled and anxious, for she was certain that this pretext of securing the Reformation had only been made the stalking-horse for the Duke's insatiable ambition. With Jane as Queen, his son would soon be declared King, and the virtual ruler of England would be the haughty Duke himself.

'Oh, my friend, my dear friend Jane, what will be the end of this ?' sighed Cecily ; 'your obedience to your mother has been stretched too far this time, for she is hardly less ambitious than the Duke himself, I know.'

Then came a few days' calm, and Cecily began to hope that the King's life would be prolonged after all. Her father came back from his mission to Kenninghall and Norwich in excellent spirits, but did not say a word to Cecily about the business that had taken him from home.





CHAPTER XI.

QUEEN JANE OR QUEEN MARY?

THE household of Sir Peter Temple were awakened from their slumbers by a loud blast from the horn hanging at the outer gate. Cecily jumped out of bed and ran to her nurse, who slept in an inner room opening from her own. 'Gillian, Gillian, did'st hear the horn? What can it be? It is scarcely daylight yet,' said Cecily; and then she ran back to her own room, to peep through the lattice and see who the messenger or visitor could be.

There was little fear of her taking cold this warm July morning, and Cecily pushed open her lattice, the better to hear all that was going on. The gate was not open yet, but her father's voice could be heard directing the steward to make haste, and the next minute the man went grumbling across the garden. Then there was quiet for a minute; only the first chirping of the little birds preparing to burst into their morning songs breaking the stillness of that hour of dawn.

But Cecily had no time to listen to the birds this morning, or to look at the glistening dewdrops

hanging from the vine on the south wall, for the messenger had been admitted, and the young lady recognized the livery of the Princess Mary.

'I bring letters for the noble knight, Sir Peter Temple,' said the messenger, and then, as the sleepy servants gathered round, Cecily heard him say, 'His Grace King Edward is dead, hath been dead these two days, and my Lady Mary now summons her faithful subjects to her castle of Framlingham. Long live Queen Mary!' shouted the man.

The shout was taken up instantly by the servants, and brought Dame Gillian to the window. 'What is it? What is it, my dear?' she said anxiously.

'They—they are proclaiming Queen Mary,' said Cecily, preparing to go down to her father; for she judged that he would obey the summons, and start for Framlingham as soon as his horse could be saddled.

She was white and trembling when she entered the hall where her father was giving orders to his servants to arm and prepare to accompany him to Suffolk.

'Hey, Cecily, what ails you, wench? What are you frightened about?'

'Is the Princess Mary to be Queen?' asked Cecily in a faltering tone.

'To be sure she is. Who else has the right?' demanded her father.

'Yes, that is the worst of it: she has the right, but—'

'Come, come, wench, there must be no "buts" in this matter. I know what you are thinking of;

I have thought of it, too, and others in Norfolk and Suffolk as well; and we have asked the Lady Mary what we may expect in the matter of religion, and she has given us a fair promise; for there are many Protestants prepared to support her cause, and she has promised to make no change in the matter of religion.'

'Are you sure she has given such a promise as this?' asked Cecily.

'Sure! What do you mean?' said Sir Peter, impatiently; 'is not the plighted word of a king's daughter enough?'

'Yes; I suppose it is, only—only you know, my father, the Lady Mary would never give up the old superstition to please her brother.'

'And right too—quite right, if she believes the old religion,' said Sir Peter warmly. 'Let everybody please themselves, now there are two religions to choose from. That's what I say; and that is what Queen Mary will do.'

'Queen Mary,' repeated Cecily; 'and they are shouting for Queen Jane in London.'

'Never mind that now, Cecily; I must be gone, for I have a long ride to Framlingham Castle, and time is precious now. Tell Gillian to look out some gay attire, something befitting the Queen's maid; for you will ride with Queen Mary to London when she goes thither.'

'And what of Queen Jane?' asked Cecily.

'Never mind Queen Jane. Let Northumberland look to her. Have a care, though, about the knaves and wenches, and remember there is but one Queen in England, Mary.'

‘Mary may be the Queen, but I shall think more of my friend—my dear friend, Lady Jane,’ said Cecily, scarcely able to repress her tears.

She sat down with her father to the morning meal of single and double ale, instead of the tea and coffee with which our modern breakfast tables are supplied; but it was little that Cecily could either eat or drink this morning, and she was not sorry when it was over.

As soon as her father had gone, she went down to see her friend, Dame Audley, and inquire whether she had heard of Mildred lately.

‘No, indeed, I am looking for a letter by the next messenger Sir Peter sends to London,’ said the Dame, and then she began talking about the prospects of having a better harvest and the drying of her herbs—of everything, in fact, but what Cecily was so anxious to hear just now, London news.

At length Master Audley came in, and, seeing Cecily, he exclaimed, ‘What is this I hear, Mistress Cecily, about the King’s Grace being dead two days, and no messenger sent from the Council to inform the Lady Mary?’

‘I am afraid they have proclaimed another Queen in London,’ said Cecily.

‘But the King had no right to pass over his two sisters, and give the crown to his cousin.’

‘It was done to insure the safety of the Reformation.’

Master Audley paced up and down the hall impatiently. ‘What evil next will they commit in the name of the Reformation?’ he inquired.

‘I—I am afraid it is not right,’ said Cecily;

‘and yet I cannot help wishing that the Lady Jane might be our Queen, for she is the most learned and pious—’

‘Yes, yes ; so I have heard, and I pity her, poor young thing ! being made a tool of the Dudleys ; but right is right, and you won’t make people believe that wrong is right, even to save the Reformation. Besides, that is safe enough—I knew God would take care of that. The Lady Mary has pledged her word that she will not seek to overthrow it, and the Protestants, as well as the Catholics of the eastern counties, have promised to support her claim to the throne.’

‘And you think we may trust to this promise ?’ asked Cecily.

‘Of course, of course,’ said Master Audley, almost as impatiently as Sir Peter himself had spoken. ‘I told Mildred one day she was fretting over a trouble that would never come,’ and he nodded significantly at Cecily.

‘What trouble was that ?’ asked his wife.

‘About the Lady Mary trying to bring back the old state of things ; I knew she would never attempt it, when more than half her subjects, and they the most enlightened, have embraced these new doctrines. No, no, there is no fear now,’ added he, as if to assure himself as well as his wife.

Cecily wished she could be as confident about this as her friend, but she took care not to infect him with her despondent fears. She spent several hours at the manor-house, and then went down to the cottage of Widow Watkins, where, to her great surprise, she saw Hodge.

'I thought you went with my father this morning,' said Cecily.

'No, Mistress Cecily; I asked Sir Peter to leave me behind, for I thought it might be that you would need me now.'

'Did you?' said Cecily, and the next moment she added, 'Yes, Hodge, I do want you; I want you to go to London, and carry some letters for me, and to bring me word quickly of all that is being done there. Go to the great cross in Chepe, and the conduit, too, and listen to the 'prentices, and ask Dame Mildred Scrope what the London priests say of the changes, and Lady Cecil will give you the court news. You will do this for me, Hodge?'

'Ay, that will I. When would you have me start on this journey?' he asked.

'To-night or to-morrow morning; the sooner the better,' said Cecily.

'Then to-night it shall be, if you will have the letters ready,' replied Hodge; 'and lest any should know where I am going, I will journey northward first, as if to Queen Mary.'

'You may trust him, Mistress Cecily. Hodge will be true to you,' said the widow.

'Oh yes, I do not fear. It may be after all that I am foolishly anxious; but I would fain hear whether they have proclaimed the Lady Jane. For other friends there is little to fear, since Queen Mary has promised to make no change in the religion established by her father and brother.'

The widow said nothing to this, but Hodge shook his head. 'I may tell all I meet that the eastern counties are rising for Queen Mary?' he said.

'You must be discreet about telling even this, I suppose. You will be careful, Hodge,' added Cecily, as she left the cottage.

She had little fear as to his zeal in her behalf, but she felt by no means certain of his discretion; and so the two or three letters she wrote were worded most cautiously, for fear they should fall into strangers' hands. At nightfall Hodge saddled his horse and came for her letters, and the other servants thought she was sending some message to her father, but felt some jealousy as to her choice of a messenger.

All the next day Cecily wandered about restless and uneasy, wondering what was going on in London, and wishing she was there.

By noon the following day Hodge was back again, bringing letters from Lady Cecil and Mildred Scrope, and with his head so full of news that he could hardly keep up the *ruse* of having been to Framlingham in his longing desire to display himself as the bearer of 'London news.'

Cecily saw the struggle that was going on, and, taking her letters, she said, 'Now, Hodge, you had better go down to Master Audley and deliver your message there,' for her friend had been taken into her confidence and knew where Hodge had been. Then she flew upstairs to open her letters—Lady Cecil's first, for she would be most likely to tell her all the court news.

Cecily's heart almost stood still as she read, 'On Monday your sweet friend, Queen Jane, came to the Tower, her mother and other ladies bearing her train, and about four o'clock two heralds left

the Tower and immediately commenced the proclamation, halting as they passed through Chepe and Fleet Street to declare that the Lady Mary's mother, being divorced from the late King Henry, she had no title to the throne.'

Cecily did not read the beginning or the close of the letter just then, and only wondered how Lady Cecil could write of other things at such a time.

On opening Mildred Scrope's letter she found that it began at once about the matter in hand. 'On Sunday our good Bishop, Master Ridley, preached a most godly sermon at Paul's Cross, bidding us be thankful to God in that He has spared us the sore calamity of having the Lady Mary to reign over us, and given us the pious Queen Jane.'

Cecily dropped her letter after reading this. 'Oh dear, what a dreadful puzzle everything is!' she said; 'even good Master Ridley thinks that God ought to manage things that way! and he is a bishop, wise and learned, and ought to know more about such things than poor women folks. Yes; it does seem as though that is the way things ought to be—this noble Reformation made secure at all costs; and that is what good Master Ridley and many others think, I dare say; but—but should it be made secure at the cost of what is right, and just, and true? The Lady Mary is King Henry's true daughter—his eldest daughter—and her father's will decrees that she should succeed her brother if he died without children. Of course, the Council and the Bishops know this; are they afraid that

God cannot take care of His own work, and so will take care of the Reformation themselves? It does seem like it, or they would not be so willing to trust that wily Duke of Northumberland, who cares far more about making his own power secure than he does for the Reformation. He care for the Reformation!’ repeated Cecily with scorn. After reading her letters fairly through, Cecily prepared to go to Master Audley’s, to hear what the London news was that Hodge had brought by word of mouth; for her letters told her little beyond the bare fact that Queen Jane had been duly proclaimed.

As she expected, Hodge was in high feather over his journey to London, and the news he had collected there, and needed little pressing to unfold his tidings. Master Audley was looking rather anxious as Cecily went in, but, hearing that she had a letter from his daughter, he took it eagerly, and left her to talk with Hodge while he went to read it to his wife.

‘Now, Hodge, make haste and tell me something of the London news,’ said Cecily.

‘Your letters have not told you everything, then, Mistress Cecily?’ said Hodge eagerly.

‘No, indeed; they tell me very little but that Queen Jane was proclaimed on Monday afternoon. Now, I want you to tell me all you saw and heard. Did you go to the great cross in Chepe?’ asked Cecily.

‘Yes, Mistress Cecily, I remembered your order, and rode on to that place as soon as I had left the letters with Dame Scrope in Aldgate; and a sorrier sight I never saw than was in Chepe yesterday, for

hard by the great conduit was set the pillory, and a likely young knave was bound there, and the blood was dripping as he sat, for both his ears had been cut off.'

'O Hodge, how dreadful! What had he been doing—robbing his master? Did you say he was a 'prentice?'

'Yes, he was a 'prentice, but it was not for robbery he had been set there, but for shouting for Queen Mary when he should have thrown his cap for the Lady Jane. He was drawer to a vintner; but men are none the less willing to cry shame on those who set him there, and they were none so glad when the Lady Jane was proclaimed.'

'Not glad!' said Cecily in amazement.

Hodge shook his head. 'There were few caps thrown, and little shouting; and, though a few citizens set out tables in the street with meat and drink for all comers, the people ate and drank and went their ways, but said little for the new Queen Jane. They whispered among themselves that Northumberland was a hard master, and the King's sister had the right to the throne.'

Cecily looked troubled, and, leaving Hodge to tell Master Audley's sons the rest of the news, she left the porch where she had been standing, and went into the house. But she turned back again before she had gone many steps. 'Hodge, did you tell Lady Cecil that the Lady Mary was gathering forces at the Castle of Framlingham?' she asked anxiously.

'Yes; I told Lady Cecil that my master and most of the people in the eastern counties were for

Queen Mary.' Hodge persisted in calling her by this title, while Cecily as constantly ignored it, and spoke of her as Lady Mary, and of her friend as Queen Jane. She went now to ask Master Audley what he thought of the aspect of affairs.

'Bad enough, any way,' said he bluntly. 'Queen Mary is raising an army in Suffolk, and the Londoners will send another to meet it, of course, and England will again be plunged in civil war,' and he walked away, looking more anxious than ever, calling to his sons not to waste any more time in listening to London news, as they must look to the defences of the house at once, for there was no knowing whether the London army would not be upon them the next day. Master Audley had evidently made up his mind to declare for Mary.

'It is right, it is right; and I can't sell my conscience even for the Reformation,' said he; 'I believe God can take care of it without our doing wrong to help Him.'

'Oh, I wish I knew; but things are all so tangled that everything seems a puzzle now.'

'Not much of a puzzle if you make up your mind to do the only right thing and leave the rest to God. I tell you, Mistress Cecily, God can take care of the Reformation, but it won't be by the triumph of Queen Jane.' And with these words he left her and Dame Audley to comfort each other as they could.





CHAPTER XII.

LONDON GOSSIP.

MASTER AUDLEY'S fears concerning a civil war were not verified in this instance. An army of six thousand men left London under the Duke of Northumberland, but not a blow was struck—not a battle fought; and Northumberland himself shouted and threw up his cap for Queen Mary at Cambridge, thinking only of his own safety, and little of the sweet girl-queen he had left at the Tower.

Cecily had no cause to complain of the want of news during the next few days; for messengers came and went almost every day, and all too soon came the news that her dearly loved friend was a prisoner in the palace-fortress where a few days before she had been declared Queen.

Then Sir Peter Temple came home in high spirits; for the throne had been won almost without a struggle, and everything promised to go merry as a marriage-bell now for the rightful Queen. 'Her Grace has not forgotten you, either, Cecily, but has chosen you as one of her maids of honour; and I bring her royal command that you shall be ready to attend her when she journeys to London.'

‘O my father, how can I do that?’ said Cecily, bursting into tears; ‘I can think of nothing but my dear friend, Lady Jane, now a prisoner in the Tower.’

‘Think what you like of the Lady Jane, but I bid you beware how you trifle with the favour of her Grace, Queen Mary,’ said Sir Peter angrily.

Cecily knew that her father was not to be ‘trifled’ with, and that it would be useless for her to raise any objection to what he had evidently made up his mind, and so, with little will for her task, she summoned her waiting-maid and Gillian to assist her in turning over her court dresses, to select one or two suitable to wear at once; for there was no time to prepare new dresses, as the Queen was to enter London early in August.

There was little need to ask what ailed London that third day of August, 1553, for everywhere was heard shouting for Queen Mary; and little wonder was it that the city was half mad, for the conduits that usually supplied water were made to run wine, and barrels of strong ale stood at every street corner, where men might drink to the health of Queen Mary as often as they pleased. But perhaps the gayest of all the gay scenes was the neighbourhood of Aldgate. Here the streets had all been laid with clean gravel, and the houses were hung with tapestry and flags and banners, while the various guilds of the city were ranged in a row, headed by the Lord Mayor, in his robe of office, and the sheriffs and macebearer all waiting near the gate to welcome the new Queen. The streets, of course, were crowded with people, and Martin

Scrope was one of them; for although his house stood near, and Mildred was looking from a window, he preferred to mingle with the crowd and listen to the scraps of conversation, that he might learn, if possible, what changes were likely to follow, or whether the promise Mary had given to leave the matter of religion as she found it was likely to be kept. Men were not yet afraid of avowing themselves Protestants, but he soon noticed that those of the old faith were pushing themselves forward.

‘Come, stand back there! stand back!’ said an official, giving Martin a push; ‘it is our turn now; your day is over, and you Gospellers had better go home and hide yourselves like rats in their holes.’

‘Ay, ay, and keep there too, I trow, for our Lady Mary will have nought to do with heretics.’

‘Well, ’t is the only favour we ask of her Grace, to be let alone,’ retorted another.

‘And that she has promised,’ said a third.

‘Promised!’ repeated another, who had already paid several visits to the conduit close by; ‘promised!’ he hiccoughed; ‘do you think the Queen’s Grace is to be bound by any promise given to heretics?’

‘Well said, good gossip; we have too many heretics in England. It has become the sink of Europe in these days, and all the pestilent Gospellers of France, and Spain, and Italy, and Flanders have come hither, and been patronised, too, by our late King, who, I doubt not, is now in the fires of purgatory, sorely repenting the evil he has done this realm.’

‘Ah, we have had over many foreigners among us! How many of these hot Gospellers didst say had come to England?’ he asked insinuatingly.

‘As many as thirty thousand! Think of it, gossips; thirty thousand foreign heretics, eating the bread that should of right be ours, and devouring Church property that has been left by the pious for the relief of the poor and the saying of masses for the delivery of souls from purgatory.’

A half-suppressed groan followed this speech, and there were cries of ‘Shame!’ from many of the bystanders, until at last Martin said, ‘Now, neighbours, you have only heard one side of the question from this man. It may be true, as he says, that there are thirty thousand Protestant refugees among us, but they are not our army of beggars. Many are craftsmen, like yourselves, and some, his Grace our late King sent for, because of their learning, to teach in our Universities. Some of you have heard perhaps, of Peter Martyr and Bernard Ochino.’

‘Two renegade Italian monks,’ sneered the man who had first spoken against the foreigners. ‘Italy would have no such heretics in her States. She was warned by the example of Germany and England, and is even now crushing out the last remnants of the attempt to bring heresy into the dominions of the Church.’

‘What! are the Gospellers so bold as to try to sow the seeds of heresy under the very nose of the Pope?’ asked one.

‘Ay, that did they, and succeeded only too well in some places; so that it is only by fire and rack

and sword that the place can be purged and the air made fit for his holiness to breathe.'

Just then there was a movement in the crowd, and Martin Scrope was jostled out of his place, but found himself next in the company of friends, two or three of them being his own parishioners.

'Well, Master Scrope, what is this change likely to bring us?' asked one rather anxiously.

'If the Queen's Grace will keep her promise and leave us alone, it is all we can ask, all we can expect. Religion must go barefoot now,' he said, with something of a smile.

'Well, well, perhaps it will do her no harm to put off her dainty slippers. She has basked in court favour of late, and too much sunshine has encouraged other growths than piety among us, I fear,' said a white-haired old man.

'Well, good gossip, we must all live, and there was one thing I had to complain of in this new religion, and that was the mean way that got to be the fashion in funerals. Now, why shouldn't there be heralds and banners and wax lights at every funeral? How are poor men like me to live, when these things begin to go out of fashion? Because, forsooth, the religion is plain and mean and has little show about it, are funerals to be the same? Mind, I'm saying no word against the new religion. I agree with it in most things; and as for our good parish priest here, Master Scrope, who has laboured to teach us to be as wise as himself in things that the old priest told us we could know nought about—why, I wouldn't go back to the old times for anything except the business; and it is business a man

must think of when he's got a wife and children. The banners and pennons get less and less every funeral that's ordered.'

'Ah, good neighbour, yours is not the only craft that's suffered,' said another. 'There's nothing to do for the churches now the saints have all been turned out—no cleaning, painting, and gilding the apostles and holy Mother, such as used to be, so that I might as well be the veriest clown and knave instead of being the most skilful painter in Chepe, for all the work I can get.'

'Well, well, I am only afraid your business will soon revive, Master Painter,' said Martin, and then he slipped his arm within the old man's. There was another movement of the crowd, and the old man was joined by his son, who, like Martin, was a parish priest.

'Ah, good Brother Scrope, evil times are coming, I fear,' he said.

'Well, Kasse, it is certain that we shall find little favour at court, but that, I think, will be little loss to true religion; but I think the Lady Mary will keep her promise, and leave things as she finds them, unless we give her occasion to think we are traitors; and then—'

'She will seize the first opportunity of breaking it,' interrupted Kasse.

'Then we must see to it that she has no fair pretext for doing so,' said Martin; 'and it would be well for us to keep as sharp an eye on our professed friends as our open foes. Let us not mix ourselves with rebels and evil-minded persons who may try to persuade us that we have a *right* to many

things we have had by favour of late. If her Grace will grant us the liberty to worship God after our own conscience we will be content.'

The old man shook his head. 'I fear 't is more than we shall get,' he said. 'There has been sharp work already. The late King's schoolmasters, Masters Cheke and Cooke, and our good Bishop, Master Ridley, have all been haled to the Tower; and it is as much for their religion as for the part they took in proclaiming the Lady Jane.'

Martin Scrope shook his head. 'I dare not whisper such a thing to my wife, but I greatly fear it, too,' he said.

'Ah, the poor women folk! 't is of them, and priests' wives especially, that I have thought of late.'

Martin raised his hand as if to ward off a blow. 'Don't, don't,' he said, in a hoarse whisper; 'I cannot bear to think of that!' But the din in the street prevented the old man's hearing the whispered words, and he went on, quite unconscious that every word he spoke went like a dagger to the heart of the man standing by his side.

'The first thing they will do is to repeal this law permitting priests to marry, and they will declare that, being unable to marry because of their priestly vows, all such marriages are null and void, and priests will be ordered to separate from their wives.'

'And what of our children?' asked Martin, stung into replying.

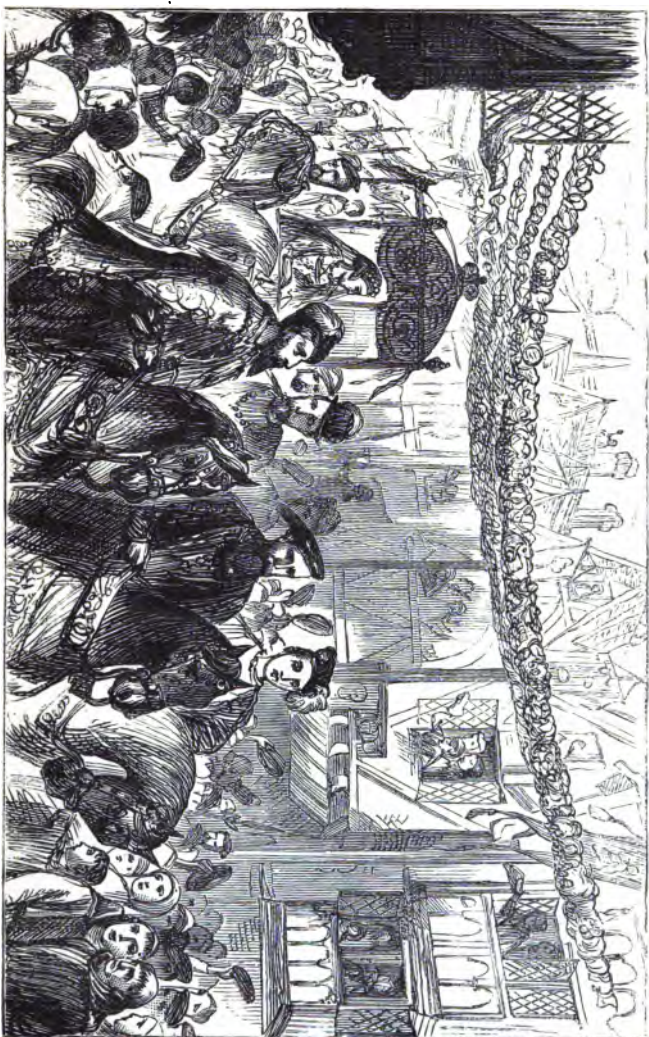
'Need you ask? But there, there!' said the old man, who began to see that the subject was an unwholesome one; 'it may not happen after all, and if it does—'

Martin could bear no more, and just at that moment a shout was raised near the gate that the Queen was near, and Martin pressed forward, like everybody else, to see whether any assurance of hope could be gathered from Mary's countenance.

'God save the Queen! God save Queen Mary!' shouted the populace, as the brilliant train drew near. It was, indeed a sight to be remembered on which the sun looked down that brilliant August day. Side by side the royal sisters rode into Aldgate—the Queen and the Lady Elizabeth—the jewels they wore and the elegant trappings of their horses making them almost too dazzling to gaze at for more than a minute. To judge from appearances one would have thought that it was for Elizabeth that mighty crowd was shouting; for she bowed and smiled continually, and made a conquest of the people's heart that day. Her sister, on the contrary, received this tumultuous welcome as though it were a thing of right, and sat upon her horse calm and unmoved, hardly deigning to notice it, even by relaxing her stern, hard features.

But people had little time to criticise the demeanour of their Queen, for her train of noble ladies, richly dressed in silver tissue, cloth of gold, velvet, and brocade, all seated on horses as gaily dressed as their riders, followed close behind, and after them came the Lord Mayor and officials of the city; then a train of nobles, with attendant knights and esquires, with flags flying and banners with armorial bearings, until the eyes grew dazzled and dizzy with gazing.

Among the Queen's maids of honour rode Cecily



IT WAS, INDEED, A SIGHT TO BE REMEMBERED ON WHICH THE EYE LOOKED DOWN THAT BRILLIANT AUGUST DAY.—See page 138.

Temple, looking sad and downcast in the midst of all this pomp and splendour, for her heart was with the captive Lady Jane, and she was thinking with some bitterness of how she had gone to the Tower less than a month before, as Queen Mary was now going, the centre of a scene as brilliant, her own proud mother acting as trainbearer. But now—now where was the nine days' queen? and what would be her fate, with that old offence—the sarcastic remark about the host—still rankling in Mary's mind? For Cecily knew that it did rankle, and would never be forgiven by her implacable mistress.

Their passage through the gate of the city was of necessity a slow affair, for the gateway, like the streets, was narrow, and the crowd would not be beaten back; so that, riding slowly along, Cecily, who was on the lookout for a friendly face among the crowd, soon espied Martin Scrope, and gave him a friendly smile of greeting.

• He did not recognize her until she thus singled him out from the crowd, and then he started with surprise. 'Mistress Cecily in the train of our new Queen!' he murmured; 'what can it mean?' He puzzled himself in vain over this question, half doubting, yet half fearing whether she had been persuaded already to abjure the reformed faith for the honour and glory of this court favour. He mused over this, looking at, yet seeing nothing of, the brilliant train of nobles, knights, esquires, guards, and servants that brought up the rear of the long *cortège*.

It came to an end at last, and many, having

shouted themselves hoarse, now hurried to the wine-running conduits, or the ale barrels, to refresh themselves, and a few friends found time to exchange opinions about what they had seen.

'T was a brave show,' said old Master Kasse, who was still leaning on his son's arm.

'Ah! and you shouted bravely, too, father,' said the son.

'Marry, and why should I not shout?' said the old man. 'You did the same, son Thomas, and quite right—quite right. The Lady Mary is our rightful Queen, and it was our duty to give her a right loyal welcome.'

'I wish, though, that she was more like her sister, the Lady Elizabeth,' said the younger man; 'our Queen looks as though—'

'Ah! as though she were ten years older than her sister, who, of course, is young and witching,' laughed old Kasse.

'It is not that, father; but there is a look in the Queen's face I like not.'

'Tut, tut! speak not evil of princes,' said his father; 'let it not be said that we are the least loyal of her Grace's subjects. She has given her royal word not to molest us, and let that suffice to put down all ungenerous suspicion.'

'Yes, yes, I think it ought,' said Martin Scrope, rallying from his abstraction. 'I have just seen a noble lady riding in the Queen's train whom I know to be as firm a Protestant as you or I. It is well known, too, that the Lady Elizabeth is a firm Protestant, and yet she is riding with the Queen in all sisterly love.'

‘Well, I hope—I do hope that our gloomy forebodings may all prove wrong. It does seem as though we were afraid to trust God with His own work,’ added Master Thomas.

Ah! we are often too ready with our bold hands to steady the ark of God. We forget that He can work without us, and will do it, too, in spite of all our blunders, that go near to marring what we would make. I sometimes fear me this business about the Lady Jane is a sore blunder. ‘T is certain that we tried to do evil that good might come, as though men gathered grapes of thorns and figs of thistles.’

‘Well, father, what was done was done with a good intent by many,’ said Kasse, and then, seeing that Martin was looking sad and anxious again, he drew him into conversation about something else, and the two friends were soon so deep in this that they did not see a horseman wearing the Queen’s livery galloping down the street, until a loud shout warned them of the danger, and then it was too late. Martin Scrope was knocked down; and when the man tried to rein in his horse he plunged and reared so violently that poor Martin was kicked several times before he could be dragged out of the way by his friend.





CHAPTER XIII.

AT THE ALDGATE PARSONAGE.

IT was with some difficulty that Martin was rescued from this perilous position, and when at last he had been dragged from the middle of the road his friend saw, to his dismay, that he was quite insensible. 'Now, now, good people, lend a hand here,' said Kasse to those who had gathered round. 'My friend's house is close by; help me to carry him there, and one of you run for a doctor.'

Two or three men soon lifted the sufferer in their arms and bore him after Kasse, who went on first to prepare Mildred for her husband's coming. He had only time to say a few hurried words when the men came up with their burden. Mildred was equal to the emergency; she neither screamed nor fainted, but, after one anxious look at her husband's pallid face, went to prepare a chamber for him, and the next minute bade the men lay him on the bed. The doctor followed very quickly, and soon pronounced Martin's injuries to be a broken leg and sundry bruises about the head, which he hoped might not prove very troublesome, now that they had been promptly attended to.

Kasse looked somewhat dismayed when he heard the nature of his friend's injuries, and he and his father nodded and whispered and shook their heads as they looked compassionately at the two little children who had crept into the room, and now stood looking shyly at the strangers.

'God help them, if our fears prove true prophets!' said the elder man.

'God always helps people,' said the eldest girl; 'don't you know "Our Father?"'

'Come here, little one, and let me hear you say "Our Father,"' said the old man; for these Reformers clung to this divine prayer, almost believing that when once this had been learned in English it would be impossible to go back to the 'beggarly elements' of Popery again.

Old Master Kasse was still talking to the children when the doctor came into the room. 'This is a most unfortunate accident,' he said, 'and but for the fact that Master Scrope has such an excellent wife he would have small chance of his life. His injuries are more severe than I thought.'

'Then he is very badly hurt,' said the younger man sadly.

'Badly hurt! I never knew a man so near being killed and survive, and it will be months—perhaps a year—before he will be able to go out again.'

'Does Dame Scrope know?' asked Kasse.

'She knows that he is badly hurt—that his life is in danger; but she is no fool, to scream and faint, but just the wife every priest needs. I came to say a word to you who are his friends. I have already spoken to his wife, although there was little

need to warn her against troubling him with any unpleasant rumours that may presently be flying about. Of course, the Reformed faith will find no favour at court now, and there may be rumours of other changes; but, whatever they may be, our friend Master Scrope must not hear them. His head is injured as well as his leg broken, and he must be kept in peace and quiet at all costs.'

'We will remember what you say, doctor,' said Master Kasse, as the doctor took his leave; and when Mildred came in soon afterward, looking pale and anxious, but still brave and cheerful, Kasse asked what he could do to help her in the parish work.

'That is just what I have come to see you about, Master Kasse,' said Mildred; 'for when poor Martin recovers his senses his first thought and care will be for his parish, and I want to assure him that everything is cared for almost as well as though he was doing it himself.'

'Well, I will undertake the services, and either do it myself or with the help of friends,' said the priest.

'And I will visit some of the sick for you, and teach a few little ones the Lord's Prayer,' said the old man.

'Oh thank you, thank you; if you will do this, and tell the poor beadmen and women to come here for their dole, or for any help my husband used to give them at the church, I shall feel so very thankful. You will tell the sick that I will come and see them as soon as I can leave Master Scrope; but just at first he will need all my care.'

The next day Mildred was called from her husband's bedside to see a 'court lady,' whom her servant, Deborah, had left standing at the door, in her flurry to tell her mistress. Mildred wondered, too, what 'court lady' would come to visit her, for she had not noticed Cecily in the Queen's train. She was, therefore, greatly surprised to see her old friend standing near the door. Cecily was looking very anxious, but she knew nothing of the accident, and did not notice Mildred's pale face; but before she had reached the sitting room, to which Mildred had led her, she said—

'My dear friend, I have come in fulfilment of the promise I once gave you—do you understand?' for Mildred had turned to her visitor, looking as though she had forgotten everything connected with that conversation twelve months before.

'A promise!' repeated Mildred. 'I must be very stupid, but I cannot recollect.'

'Not recollect the dread you felt when we talked of the King dying?' said Cecily in surprise, for she had expected to find her friend almost beside herself with anxiety, now that their worst fears had been realised. But, whatever her husband's fears had been of late, they had been carefully hidden from his wife, and here in London the Reformation had seemed so firmly rooted—so secure—that the old dread had passed entirely out from Mildred's life, and she could not recall now what Cecily's promise had been about.

'I have come to warn you, Mildred! Don't you remember I said I would do so if ever the time came that the warning was needful? Now I think

the time has come ; and you and Martin and your dear little children ought to leave London—had better leave England, for—the Queen will not keep her promise, I fear.’

Mildred passed her hand across her brow wearily. ‘I think I know what you mean, Cecily ; but I cannot leave England, or even London now, for my dear husband is like to die of—’

‘Martin ill ! But, Mildred, surely I saw him yesterday as I rode after the Queen’s Grace.’

‘Yes, the accident did but happen yesterday ;’ and Mildred told what she supposed her talkative maid would not fail to tell to every one that came to the door.

‘It is, indeed, a woeful accident,’ said Cecily, when she heard of Martin’s dangerous condition, which would sadly complicate matters, and render escape almost impossible.

‘Yes, I dare not leave him many minutes, for, although he has not recovered consciousness, the pain he suffers makes him very restless.’ It was evident that Mildred’s mind was so full of sorrow for her husband that she could not grasp the idea of the danger her friend had come to warn her of, now that it actually threatened her, although it had almost overwhelmed her before ; and Cecily soon saw this.

‘Poor Mildred ! you ought to have some one with you besides that wench, who was frightened at a court lady,’ she said.

‘I had thought of sending for mother, but not now ; she must not come here, now that you tell me what may happen, for it will be worse than

death to her, Cecily, and she might let Martin know it, too; and that must not be.'

'But what will you do?' asked Cecily.

'I can bear it—bear anything they can say or do, for I know that nothing can really separate me from my Martin, for we are one in the love of God; and if God took him he would be waiting until I could join him in the kingdom of our Father.'

'But, Mildred dear, you must not forget your little children,' said Cecily, hardly able to repress her tears; for this calm, placid Mildred she could not understand: she seemed already to have passed to a region where earth's sorrows could only fall harmless at her feet.

But at the mention of her children something of the old Mildred appeared again. 'Do you think I could ever forget them?' she asked almost fiercely. 'No, no; but for their sake I must keep Martin quiet; he must not be disturbed, and this he would be if my mother should come hither and hear these sorry tidings you bring.'

'But, Mildred, would it be impossible to carry your husband to a place of safety? Gardiner, the cruel, persecuting Bishop, is already released from his prison-room in the Tower, and is, I hear, to be made Lord Chancellor. The order is now preparing for the release of Bonner from the Marshalsea, and one poor man, for venturing to say that the Queen ought to keep her promise in this matter of religion, has already been put in the Chepe pillory, I hear.'

But nothing seemed to rouse Mildred's fears now, and at last Lady Cecily was obliged to leave, promising, however, to come again the following day, and

see if Martin was not better. From her friend, Mildred Scrope, Cecily went to Lady Cecil's, to talk over this and other matters. Only a day or two before this lady had been in as great a trouble as her friend, but by the interest of herself and her sister, Sir Anthony Cooke had been released from the Tower, and they had good hopes of gaining the pardon of his companion, Master Cheke.

Lady Cecil was full of exultation about this, although she informed Cecily, as a great secret, that she feared her father would leave England before long.

'That is what I am anxious Mildred Scrope and her husband should do, but this accident will, I fear, make it impossible,' said Cecily.

'But wherefore should they be in such a hurry to leave? I do not think the Queen will break her promise not to interfere with the established religion.'

But Cecily shook her head. 'You do not know that evil-minded tyrant, Gardiner. I have heard that my beloved mistress, Queen Catharine Parr, narrowly escaped losing her life more than once. Once he had so far gained the King's consent that he brought an armed party with him to arrest the Queen for heresy; but in this he went too far, for the King had altered his mind. But Gardiner has not abated his hatred, I trow, and presently we shall see another such scene as that of Mistress Anne Askew.'

'Anne Askew was rash and indiscreet,' said Lady Cecil; 'let me warn you, Cecily, not to follow her example.'

'I am afraid I have not the courage; and, indeed, it seems little likely that any in these evil times will follow the example of that godly woman, and die rather than deny the Lord Christ.'

'We do not know; we cannot tell,' said Lady Cecil musingly. 'As you say, the times are evil, and, doubtless, many have professed the Reformed doctrine because it was fashionable—because it would gain for them court favour or the patronage of some great man, or some office in Church or State; and these, of course, will be the first to throw off the disguise, as my Lord Northumberland has done, and like him boldly now avow that they have ever been Catholics in heart. Then there will be some—many—who through timorousness, or for some other weighty reason, will conform; perhaps go to the mass, if it be commanded; but think not that they will believe in it, or embrace it in their hearts, only—' and the lady paused, her eyes falling beneath the earnest gaze Cecily bent upon her.

'You do not counsel such weak compliance—you, Mildred Cooke!' said Cecily.

'I—I was but saying what might be—what many good earnest Protestants might be forced to do, if the Queen follows the counsel of Gardiner and Bonner, who are soon to be released, I hear. Cecily, be warned in time, and flaunt no defiance in the Queen's face.'

'What do you mean? I should not think of defying the Queen, but I cannot act contrary to my conscience—I cannot go to mass, even to please Queen Mary.'

'Then you will be dismissed in disgrace, and

that will anger your father, even if nothing worse should follow. Now, Cecily, let me give you a word of warning—be cautious.'

'I will not run into needless danger. I have not the courage of Dame Anne Askew, who, when she heard that the priests of Lincoln had boasted that they would assault her and put her to great trouble, boldly went to the minster, to read the Bible chained at the desk.'

'A most foolish thing to do,' remarked Lady Cecil.

'No, no; I think that Anne Askew did mean by this to vindicate the right which the King had granted to all his subjects—the right to read the Bible in English; and that the priests dared not molest her is a proof that they knew her to be innocent of any wrong doing, when she stood before them reading and turning the leaves of the great Bible.'

'Well, well, Cecily, I hope that the fate of poor Mistress Askew will be a warning to many in these days. Now, can you tell me anything concerning the fate of Lady Jane Dudley and her husband? The Duke of Suffolk, her father, is to be released, I hear.'

'Yes; the proud Duchess made supplication to the Queen for him, saying he was ill; but—that woman cannot have a heart, Mildred—for not one word did she say for her sweet young daughter, though 't is well known she forced the crown upon her. My dear friend Jane! if I might only visit her, it would be some little comfort,' concluded Cecily with a burst of tears.'

‘Now, Cecily, if you wish to help Lady Jane, you must not do aught to offend the Queen,’ said Lady Cecil. ‘I am truly sorry for what occurred at New-hall last summer, for it’s said that Mary has neither forgotten nor forgiven the Lady Jane’s sarcastic words, and I fear her stout Protestantism will stand sadly in the way of her pardon.’

‘I fear it greatly, too; but of this I am sure, that Lady Jane will not thank me for any favour done her at the cost of my duty to God. But now let me ask what you would counsel me to do in this matter of Martin Scrope?’

‘They cannot leave London, you say?’

‘No; it is quite impossible. Do you know what their punishment is likely to be—hers as well as his—if this dreadful law of the Six Articles is revived? And since Gardiner, who was the principal author of it at first, is again in power, I fear it is sure to be re-enacted.’

‘Their marriage will be declared null and void, I suppose,’ said Lady Cecil.

‘That is not all. Their possessions are all to be forfeited to the crown, and themselves imprisoned for life. O Mildred, think of the aching hearts, the desolated homes, the shame and sorrow and anguish that will fall upon hundreds of devout, earnest men and women, if these infamous Six Articles become law again. Cannot Sir William do something to prevent it? They say the present Parliament will be dismissed at once, and another chosen, who will pass Catholic laws. Cannot Sir William do something for the poor Protestants in this matter?’

‘Cecily, what could he do? He is but a servant

of the crown. The Secretary of State can only obey the orders of the King and Council, and, my dear child, you are distressing yourself needlessly—you are running forward to meet troubles that may never come. Let us wait patiently. I do not think the Queen will risk losing her popularity by breaking her promise.'

'But you forget it is not the Queen alone we have to fear, but men like Gardiner and Bonner, who will urge her to restore Popery at all costs. I think your father is wise; and I doubt not that many more learned and godly men will leave the kingdom while they have the chance to escape. By-and-by it will be too late, perhaps; and that is why I want to think of some plan for poor Mildred Scrope since she cannot think for herself; she cannot even see any danger now, her heart is so full of sorrow for her husband.'

But although several plans were discussed, they each had to be dismissed in turn—sometimes by Lady Cecil, sometimes by Cecily herself; and at last she had to leave her friend with the question of Martin Scrope's safety still unanswered, and she returned to the Tower, duly attended by her maid and a train of footmen, as became her rank as a 'court lady.'





CHAPTER XIV.

THE QUEEN'S BREACH OF PROMISE.

MILDRED was not troubled with the care of her husband's parish work long. Her friend, Master Kasse, conducted the service in English the Sunday following Martin's accident, but before the next came round the national religion had been changed ; the mass was ordered to take the place of the simple English service, and the Lord Mayor was instructed not to allow in any city ward 'open reading of the Scriptures in churches, or preaching by the curates, unless licensed by the Queen.' As the head of the English Church, Mary had the power to do this ; and after the example that had been made of the country gentlemen who ventured to remind people of the Queen's promise in this matter, men were cautious how they talked, for no one coveted a seat in the pillory, with the probable loss of his ears into the bargain.

No time was now lost in removing the great Bibles that had been chained to the desk in every church for the use of all who desired to read them. The communion tables were also removed, and altars, with their elaborate ornaments and fittings,

were soon set up. There was plenty of work now for the wax chandlers, painters, and gilders, for the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments, which had been engraved above each communion table, were painted out, and images of the saints, or pictures, took their place, surrounded by a blaze of light from enormous candles kept burning before them.

To many this change of religion meant a revival of their declining trade, while many others looked upon it as an inalienable right of the sovereign, since the headship of the Church was vested in the crown, to make such changes in the national religion as was thought fit. It was not the first time the whole ritual had been changed in this way; and, much as they might deplore it, and in their hearts cling to the simpler and more reasonable service, many went to the parish church and joined in the service of the mass, feeling they would be guilty of a breach of loyalty to dare to question their sovereign's wisdom or will in this matter.

Many others, however, regarded their duty to God as being above their duty to the Queen. They were willing to fulfil the apostle's injunction and 'honour the King,' but they could not forget that 'to fear God' was the first command; and their 'fear of God' forbade their joining in the idolatrous worship of the mass; and so their places were empty in church, and many of them gathered in each other's houses to pray, read the Scriptures, and hear their own ministers expound them; for, of course, these Protestant clergymen, like Martin Scrope and Thomas Kasse, could not obtain the

Queen's license, and many of the Protestant bishops were now in prison.

Cecily's visits to the Scropes were at an end when the Queen left the Tower, about the middle of August, for her palace of Whitehall, and it was not until the middle of September that she found an opportunity of visiting her friends again.

Martin was better by that time. The wounds on his head were healing, he had recovered consciousness, and it was hoped his brain had received no serious injury. 'He knows me now quite well, and the children, too,' said Mildred delightedly.

'He knows nothing of the change that has taken place, I suppose,' said Cecily.

'Oh, no, indeed; and he must not know it yet,' said Mildred earnestly; 'the shock would kill him, I am sure.'

'And yet I—I think, Mildred, you ought to tell him something of it, and ask the doctor whether he cannot be moved; for you ought to leave England, and at once, too.'

'It is quite impossible,' said Mildred; 'I cannot, dare not, risk his life by telling him what has happened lately.'

'But, my dear friend, have you thought that this is but the beginning, and worse may follow? Did you know that good Master Hooper, the Bishop of Gloucester, has been taken, and brought to the Fleet, and one of the first questions Gardiner asked him was, whether he was married. "Yes, my lord; and will not be unmarried until death unmarry me," said Hooper. Upon which Gardiner reproached him, and called him a beast, and ordered him to be

confined in the most noisome dungeon in the Fleet, next the town ditch. Think you now that you will be in better case by-and-by if you do not make good your escape very soon ?’

‘But, Cecily, it would be certain death to my husband to move him—even the telling him the need of it might prove fatal. Master Kasse says he will not give up all for lost yet—the Convocation will not resign everything quietly.’

‘But what can Convocation do, or even the Parliament ?’ said Cecily. ‘The Queen is the head of the Church until she hands her power to the Pope again.’

‘And think you she will do that !’

‘I am sure she wishes it ; for it is against her conscience that she exercises this power,’ said Cecily ; and then she told her friend of the splendid preparations being made for the Queen’s coronation, and how busy all the tailors and embroiderers were preparing dresses for the court.

But by-and-by the conversation came back to the old subject, by Cecily saying that she was going to the Fleet on her way back, to give poor Bishop Hooper a little money ; for he was almost dependent upon charity, even for what he had in prison.

‘It must be a comfort to him to know that his wife and children are in safety, for Dame Hooper has gone to Holland, you know,’ added Cecily.

‘I am glad,’ said Mildred, ‘since the Bishop is in such evil case that his wife can do nothing for him ; but with Martin it is quite different, and—and I have less fear about our marriage now than I

once had. I have talked with other good dames here in London, who will not believe that their marriage can ever be a matter of reproach, a scandal, or a crime. Has not God said, "A man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife?" Has not an apostle said, "Marriage is honourable in all," and, "A bishop should be the husband of one wife?" which is quite plain to me that the Scriptures do not forbid priests to marry.'

Cecily was very glad to see something of the old spirit roused in Mildred; but she knew that, however much she might have been strengthened in her own mind and conscience as to the fitness of her marriage when brought to the law of God, it might be declared null and void by the law of the land, and probably would be when the new Parliament met, for means were being taken to secure the return of such members as would not be likely to oppose the wishes of the Queen in the matter of religion; and she tried to explain something of this to her friend; but Mildred would not be alarmed. Her husband's health must be her sole care now, and since there had been a little improvement in his condition he must be guarded with the greater solicitude, that none of these unpleasant rumours might reach him.

So Cecily was obliged to go away, feeling that she could do nothing more for her friends at present, and hardly knowing whether to praise or blame Mildred for her persistent determination to keep all knowledge of the danger from her husband.

From the Aldgate parsonage to the Tower was not far, and she had received permission to pay a short visit to her dear friend, Lady Jane Grey, who was still a prisoner. The Duke of Northumberland, and some of the other chief conspirators who had made her Queen, had already been beheaded, but it was hoped that the innocent girl who had been but their tool and dupe would obtain the Queen's pardon if she was only compliant in the matter of religion. Cecily had begun to hope that the Queen's clemency would be extended to her without this, for she knew Lady Jane too well to imagine that she would violate her conscience to save her life; she was too well instructed in the principles of the Protestant faith to believe in the sophistries of the mass.

The Beauchamp Tower was the prison allotted to all State captives, and here the Duke of Northumberland, Jane's father-in-law, had spent the last days of his life; but a little leniency had been shown to Lady Jane, although she was not allowed to see her husband. Instead of the actual prison rooms, she had been confined to the warder's house, who, being a humane man, allowed her as much liberty as he dared. She seems to have taken meals with him and his family, and to have been treated with every mark of honour and respect. It would, indeed, be difficult to imagine how any one could treat otherwise this beautiful, gentle, pious lady.

Cecily was so overcome on seeing her in Warder Partridge's humble rooms, that she burst into tears, and she whom she had come to comfort had to soothe and comfort her instead.

'Come, come, Cecily; I am not in such evil case now as our dear mistress, Queen Catharine. Dost thou remember that night when the King and Queen were at Whitehall, and one pitched up in the gallery the bill of attainder against the Queen, with the King's signature already affixed to the mandate for her arrest?'

'Oh, shall I ever forget that night, or the consternation of the Queen when she heard all that infamous plot? For it was not only herself, but you, and my Lady Tyrwhitt, and Lady Herbert that Gardiner also aimed at.'

'Yes; if it had not been for the prudent gentleness of the Queen in appealing to the King, we might all have shared the fate of her other gentlewoman, Anne Askew. I have of late thought much of Mistress Anne,' concluded Lady Jane with something of a sigh.

'Many times have you thought of that noble and courageous lady, I doubt not,' said Cecily; 'but I fear that few will be found to follow her example. This is not the age of martyrs, for men's minds have been so taken up of late with making the best of both worlds that they have grown to love this too well to exchange it even for a better.'

'Nay, Cecily; we cannot tell—we do not know,' said the Lady Jane gently.

'But I know that the mass is set up again in most places, and people go to church now, as they did before, because it is fashionable,' said Cecily.

'I would not say that, Cecily,' replied Lady Jane. 'Many of them will, doubtless, go for fear it should bring trouble upon them if they stay

away; but to many who have heard the English service so long, and learned the Lord's Prayer and Apostles' Creed—to them the old idolatrous service can never be the same that it was in those older days when they knew not the meaning of a word that was spoken. Now, when the Paternoster is repeated, they can join silently in it with the "Our Father," and so even the mass will help them to rise up to God sometimes.'

'Yes, I can believe all that,' remarked Cecily; 'but still—still I am disappointed. O Lady Jane, if only things might be as we wish! but now I fear our noble Reformation will be swept quite away, and we shall all be subjects of the Pope again!'

'Dear Cecily, you are laying a burden upon yourself that you have no strength to carry. Cannot you trust God to take care of this work, even as He took care of us when our cruel enemies plotted to take our lives and that of our most noble mistress and Queen? Believe me, it was not chance that caused Wriothsesley to drop those papers in the gallery, or that one of our friends found them and brought them to the Queen. No, no, Cecily; God will take care of us so long as we are needed here, and the Reformation, too; and if by our death more good can be done than by our life, He will not spare to take us. But now tell me how the Queen's Grace fareth. A crown of gems is often lined with thorns, Cecily; and few can know how sharp they prick but those who wear it.'

'Well, as you know, my royal mistress was often subject to distressing headaches, which, I think, have been more frequent of late,' said Cecily.

'And my cousin Elizabeth—I fear I have greatly offended her by what was no act of mine, but the doing of others,' said Lady Jane.

'I fear the Lady Elizabeth is displeased with the Protestant leaders for passing her over in their search for a Protestant Queen,' answered Cecily.

'Nay, nay; she should not be displeased at that, but rather be thankful that she was spared being drawn unto death. She will be Queen yet, I doubt not. Give her my poor love and duty, and bid her live for the Protestant faith, as I shall die for it. We might have exchanged places in this, if she had been chosen for a nine days' masque Queen—unless—unless the Queen should marry and have children. Have you heard aught of this, Cecily?' asked Lady Jane.

'I have heard it whispered that the Queen will wed the Prince of Spain,' said Cecily.

'The Prince of Spain! her cousin!—then God defend the realm of England, if that cruel man comes here,' exclaimed Jane; and this news seemed to arouse her more than anything else she had heard.

Cecily begged her not to talk of it to Master Partridge, or any of his family, as it was only a secret whispered among the Queen's ladies at present; but there was certainly some truth in the rumour, for the Spanish ambassador had been with the Queen so often of late. She took her leave soon after this, glad to escape without a word being said about the coming coronation. Poor Lady Jane would hear enough about it in a few days, for the Queen was coming to the Tower a day or two

before, in order to pass through the city, that her loyal and liberal subjects might see her.

Mary was very popular just now, and the citizens had given a substantial proof of their loyalty by lending her twenty thousand pounds to pay the expenses of her coronation. If Cecily and a few others had only had the handling of this money, it would not have passed into the Queen's coffers until some substantial guarantee had been given that there should be no further changes made in religion; but no one dreamed of the tragic years that were immediately to follow, or that their beloved Princess would ever become the cruel persecutor she did.

Cecily's next visit was to the Fleet, and here she met with a very different reception from that which Master Partridge had accorded her. A more brutal man than Babington, warden of this prison, it would be difficult to find. He was rather more civil when he heard she was one of the Queen's maids, but he looked at her very keenly and suspiciously when she asked to be taken to Dr. Hooper.

'And pray, mistress, do you know that this is a hot Gospeller and a most pestilent heretic?' said Babington.

'I know he was chaplain to my Lord Somerset, and a most godly man,' said Cecily, and, gathering courage, she went on, 'I came not here to bandy words with you, Master Babington, but to see the good Bishop; therefore lead the way without further parley.'

Cecily had taken care to bring her train of servants in sight, and Babington, like all bullies and

cowards, quailed before the woman who could travel with such a retinue, and under the protection of the royal livery, too. Without another word, he led her to the damp, dark, foul-smelling prison room where Bishop Hooper was confined.

The haughty maid of honour had vanished as Babington closed the door, and Cecily's first act was to kneel at the prisoner's feet and ask his blessing; and, although he knew not why she came, or whether he had ever seen her before, he had little doubt but that she was one who might soon be called upon to endure persecution for the Gospel's sake; and so, in a voice trembling with earnestness and emotion, he raised his hands and said, 'May the Lord in His mercy grant you, and all the godly, grace to suffer with patience and fortitude all you may be called upon to endure for the Gospel's sake!'

Little less than an angel of light must Cecily have seemed to the Bishop in his cold, desolate prison, for she had brought a letter from his wife, and some material comforts to lighten his affliction. She had likewise been told to notice the furniture with which he was supplied, and so, while he stood near the window reading his precious letter, she took the opportunity of examining the bed, and found it to be a mere pad of straw and a dirty tick with a few feathers in it. Hooper was not without friends in London, for while he was chaplain to the unfortunate Lord Protector he had endeared himself to many by his zeal and earnestness, as well as by his simple, pious life. His long residence in Geneva made him wish to go further than any of

the other bishops in the matter of reform, and when he was presented to the bishopric of Gloucester he at first refused to accept it because of the form of oath required at his consecration, and the wearing the robes—the ‘Aaronical habits,’ he called them. But, in spite of these scruples, Hooper was much beloved by many, and they determined to help him, and Cecily had been their messenger.





CHAPTER XV.

WEARISOME SPLENDOUR.

THE Queen's coronation was a matter of deep thought to all those specially engaged in arranging its various details ; for she was the first Queen *regnant* since the Saxon conquest, and whether any of the known precedents could be departed from in the ordering of her apparel was a most puzzling question. Doubtless, if a male heir could have been discovered in the royal family, the two Princesses would have been passed over on the score of their mothers' divorce ; but, look which way they would, none but heiresses presented themselves, and the next after Elizabeth was Mary of Scotland, now betrothed to the Dauphin. The merchants and political economists were specially anxious that the kingdom should not fall into her hands, for, if it did, it would sink into an appendage of the French crown, and that meant ruin to its commerce and importance.

These political considerations, both before and after the coronation, occupied the minds of many much more than the religious struggle that was going on. There was a riot at Paul's Cross, and

frequent struggles for the possession of a church and its pulpit, but most of the citizens regarded these as the quarrels of a few priests and bishops. Gardiner, the Lord Chancellor, and Bonner, just created Bishop of London in place of Ridley, had been imprisoned during part of King Edward's reign, and it was but natural that they should make the Reformers feel that they were not going to have it quite all their own way; so they shrugged their shoulders, and talked of the revival of trade, and wondered whom the Queen would marry. They discussed, also, the important matter of the coronation, whether the Queen should be arrayed in spurs and sword, as a King would be. It is certainly indicative of the spirit of the age, and the combativeness of our forefathers, that these insignia could *not* be dispensed with; and so the Queen was crowned 'in all particulars like unto the King of England.'

The citizens had to make their own preparations for the royal progress through the city, from the Tower to Whitehall. On this occasion the Queen wore a gown of blue velvet, furred with ermine, and on her head was a caul of gold net-work, adorned with pearls and precious stones, the weight of which was so great that she had to hold up her head with her hand.

Cecily, who rode behind the royal sisters, dressed in crimson satin, knew that not only was the weight of this gold uncomfortable, but that her mistress also suffered from one of her violent headaches; and most deeply did she pity the royal sufferer as the grand procession moved on; for the pageants prepared were so numerous, and the stoppages so frequent,

that it seemed as though they made no progress at all. In Fenchurch Street they listened to orations from four great giants; in Gracechurch Street to a solo on a trumpet from a great angel in green—the Tudor colour. At St. Paul's School the Queen's favourite poet and player, Heywood, sat under a vine, and delivered an oration mostly in derision of the Reformed faith. At St. Paul's, Peter the Dutchman was playing gymnastics on the weathercock at the top; but by the time this was over the shades of evening compelled them to hurry past most of the other wonderful sights, greatly to Cecily's relief, who knew that the Queen must be suffering agonies in all this noise and din.

They had left the Tower at three o'clock in the afternoon, but it was nearly dark before they reached Whitehall, where the Queen was to rest for the night, in preparation for the wearisome and tedious ceremony of the following day. Of course, there was plenty of feasting and drinking, and after the city conduits had spouted their wines for a few hours, and men's tongues got loose, the speedy downfall of the new religion was freely talked of, and the Gospellers threatened with imprisonment and burning as soon as the new Parliament could meet to revive Gardiner's act of the 'Six Articles.' A few talked more quietly, but shook their heads more ominously over the one departure from precedent in the coronation, that the Archbishop of Canterbury would not perform the ceremony, and many agreed that the Queen's reign would prove most disastrous from this fact. So superstitious were the best of people in that age.

Some few indulged the hope that the Tower being left unguarded, the Protestants would rescue the Archbishop Cranmer, with his companions, Latimer and Ridley, and, once out of this fortress-prison, they could soon make good their escape to the Continent. Indeed, some few hoped they would flee of their own accord; for they had a fair chance of escape now, which they might never have again. But it was found the next day that the three heroic leaders had not fled from their posts, and they were not likely to do so now.

Some few hoped that, as the ambassadors of Cleves were present at the coronation, in spite of the change in religion, some assurance had been given the Protestant States concerning these prisoners; but the usual free pardon, when it came to be known in its entirety, made so many exceptions that it seemed but a mockery. Not one of the Protestants now in prison was to be released, but the Flemish ambassadors must be treated with all honour because of the commercial relations of the two countries. The change of religion was constantly before men's eyes now, for the processions of priests and monks through the streets were almost of daily occurrence, and denunciations of the Protestants were hurled from the old stone pulpit at Paul's Cross, where, only a short time before, the sermons of Ridley and Latimer had been listened to with rapt attention by their thoughtful hearers.

Of course, the new order of things pleased the thoughtless and frivolous. There were more holidays now that the saints' days were to be observed again, and there was fun in being richly dressed

to take part in the processions and mystery plays that often took the place of the preaching of the Gospel. Then there was more to see and criticise at church, where they could discuss the millinery of the altar, the dresses of the Virgin and saints, and the richly embroidered capes of the priests. Altogether, the 'prentice lads liked the change, for they could go out to practise archery on Sunday at Moorfields, or the Butts in Finsbury, and for the more riotous there was always a bear-baiting at Southwark, or some other sport going forward. Meanwhile the picked Parliament met, and Gardiner reigned supreme. Some of its first acts were to repeal the laws of Edward VI. for the establishment of the Protestant Church of England. Convocation met, too, for the settlement of religion, but Gardiner had taken care to strike the 'head deer' of the flock first, and though the few left bravely made a bold defence, what could they do in the face of the overwhelming odds against them?

Early in December Cecily came to the Aldgate parsonage again, being brought there in a litter by her servants at her own request, for she was very ill, and the Queen had given her permission to retire for a few months to recruit her health.

Martin Scrope was improving in health, but not as rapidly as the doctor said he ought; but still Mildred was glad to receive her friend into her home, and was sufficiently at liberty to give her some little attention.

'What is it, Cecily?—how long have you been ill?' asked Mildred. She had tried to live apart from the outside world lately, and to keep all know-

ledge of it from her husband, and she had succeeded to a great extent, so that Cecily's passionately reproachful, 'Can you ask, Mildred, after all that has happened?' somewhat surprised her. Gossip Mildred never encouraged, and those were not the days of newspapers; so that events of the greatest importance might be going on, and people around know nothing of them.

But how such important facts as the attainder and trial of Lady Jane Grey and her husband, and of the Archbishop of Canterbury, could escape Mildred's knowledge was a puzzle to Cecily, and she felt inclined to resent her friend's entire absorption in her home cares, until she saw how deeply she was moved.

'Yes; she is condemned—my dear, dear friend!' said Cecily, with another burst of sobs. 'O Mildred, the Queen might spare her—she would if she loved her now as she once did, and her good citizens of London would be pleased, too, for crowds followed her from Guildhall, crying and groaning at the thoughts of such a sweet girl being burned or beheaded.'

'Burned or beheaded!' exclaimed Mildred; 'surely you cannot mean it, my dear.'

'Indeed, indeed, it is true! Some of them about the court hope and believe the Queen will yet pardon her; but I—I am afraid to hope.'

'Cecily, dear, I am afraid it is this that has made you ill; you have given up all hope in God, and man, too.'

'I am afraid I have,' sighed Cecily; 'but you would not wonder at it if you knew how dark and

threatening everything looks. The Parliament has passed that dreadful act of the "Six Articles;" the Lady Jane Grey is condemned to death; most of our Protestant Bishops are in prison. It is almost dangerous to dare to stay away from mass now, and if the Queen marries the Prince of Spain we shall have the Inquisition established here as it is in Spain.'

'But, Cecily, are you sure the Queen intends to marry the Prince of Spain? I have heard it was to be Courtenay, the Earl of Devon, or that the Pope would dissolve the vows of Cardinal Pole, that she might wed him. You see I have heard something of court affairs,' added Mildred with a smile.

'Yes, Gardiner has caused the story to be circulated that both he and the Parliament would favour either as a husband for the Queen; but I know that she has promised the Spanish ambassador that she will wed Philip; and, having made up her mind about this, not even Gardiner can persuade her to give it up, I know. O Mildred, I wish you had gone away, for I am afraid dark days are coming!'

'My dear, I think it is partly your health. You have fretted and made yourself anxious about this matter, as though God had given up *His* throne to Queen Mary and her Lord Chancellor. Now, my dear, you must try to be quiet—try to believe that God can carry on the work of the world without you or me, Cecily, and—and that some work is better done where it seems to be undone.'

But Cecily could not see any gleam of hope. To her short-seeing eyes the Reformation was ruined

and undone, now that the mass was everywhere set up. She also had had the pain of seeing several of her own dear friends among the Queen's ladies, who were formerly earnest Protestants, now going openly to mass, and among these was her dear friend, Lady Cecil.

Lady Cecil's defection had been the last blow to poor Cecily's already sorrowful heart, and she had completely broken down; but she took care to hide her friend's fall from Mildred, although she could not help thinking of it a good deal herself. Her illness, it seemed, was not entirely due to fretting and anxiety, but proved to be an attack of ague; and as her father had left London on a mission to France, Mildred decided that it would be better for Cecily to remain with her rather than undertake a journey into the country at this season of the year, and in her present weak condition. Of course her old nurse, Gillan, and her maid, had come with her, and these two Mildred found were difficult to please, and much more exacting than their mistress. They found fault with everything—the size of the chambers, the rushes on the floor, the plain cloth hangings on the walls, even with Deborah's personal appearance and behaviour.

- Gillian felt herself specially aggrieved, because she was certain her young mistress was hiding something from her—that she must have some secret and powerful reason for not going to Lady Cecil's house, where the accommodation would be so much better in every way, and where Gillian herself could find companionship among some of the upper and older servants of Sir William's household. What could

possess her young mistress to come and bury herself in the household of a poor priest was beyond Gillian's comprehension. It had been all very well for the knight's daughter to patronize Master Audley's daughter—they were almost the only neighbours they could speak to in the country; but to continue the friendship here in London—to come and visit them upon terms of equality—well, Dame Gillian came to the conclusion that this Reformation was just turning the world upside down.

A few days later, and the good dame was still more astonished; for, as she sat at the lattice overlooking the street, she saw a train of servants coming up the street, and amused herself by describing their liveries and armorial bearings to Cecily, who was lying on a couch in the room.

'Why, nurse, it is the badge of the Brandons; surely it cannot be that the Lady Jane is released!' exclaimed Cecily, trying to sit up.

'Be still, child; be quiet; for the lady, whoever she is, is coming here—it is not the Lady Jane Grey, though,' added old Gillian, peering down into the street to see all that could be seen.

'No, no, of course not; I am very foolish,' said Cecily, lying back on her pillows; but tears of disappointment rose to her eyes at the quenching of this momentary hope.

'No, it is not the Lady Jane, but some one—a lady much older,' went on Gillian.

'Can it be! I wonder whether it is the Duchess of Suffolk—Lady Jane's step-grandame?'

'What, the lady there is such talk about at court—who is going to marry a plain gentleman without

title, because he is as hot a Gospeller as Bishop Ridley himself !' exclaimed Gillian.

'Mr. Birtie is a learned and accomplished gentleman, as well as a devout and thorough Protestant,' responded Cecily ; 'and I am glad the good Duchess is going to marry him. But I wonder—' Cecily had no time to express her wonder, for the next minute the door was opened, and Mildred ushered in the Duchess of Suffolk herself. The noble-hearted lady, who had nursed through his last illness, and closed with her own hands, the dying eyes of Martin Bucer, because he was a foreigner and a Protestant, could not pass the door of her tenant, Master Scrope, when she heard that he was ill and might be in need of some assistance. She knew that he was one of the Protestant clergy—and, although she had passed his house many times before without thinking of paying him a visit, she could not do so now.

Gardiner might boast that he had cut off 'the head deer' of the flock, but the rest were not scattered. No, no ; they were only being driven closer together—closer to each other and closer to God. The rank and titles and distinctions of earth were all being forgotten now, and they were grasping hands in the one faith, the one hope, of the Gospel. The Duchess knew Cecily, and when she heard from Mildred—who thought the Duchess had come to visit her guest—that Cecily was ill, she at once asked to be shown to her chamber.

Gillian withdrew when the ladies entered, and Mildred would have done the same had not the Duchess desired her to stay, as she had come to see her husband, not knowing that Mistress Temple was there.

Then, turning to Cecily, she said, 'How is it you are not with my Lady Cecil now, Mistress Temple?'

Cecily raised her eyes and looked keenly at the Duchess, who at once understood what she meant. 'I know, I know!' she whispered; 'but, child, you must not be hard on Mildred Cecil—Sir Anthony Cooke's daughters can never cordially turn to popish idolatry. You must be patient, and have charity even for those who sink in the day of trial. They don't do it willingly, and we know not the strength of their temptations!' Then she asked in a louder tone if Cecily had seen her granddaughter, the Lady Jane Grey lately, and how it fared with good Master Latimer, in whose welfare she had always taken a great interest. Then she went to Martin's chamber, and inquired into the particulars of his accident, and whether he had been able to make any provision for these dark days, as she knew he had been expelled from his living. At leaving she told Mildred she should not expect any rent to be paid for the house—it was a detached portion of her mansion of the Minories; but that, if she could shelter any of the distressed brethren she should like her to do it, as the rent charge of the house.

Gillian flew to the lattice to see the Duchess depart, exclaiming as she did so: 'Well, this is the strangest thing of all, and what I might say is true as the Gospel, that this Reformation is just turning the world upside down.'





CHAPTER XVI.

BLACK MONDAY.

THE visit of the Duchess of Suffolk certainly did Cecily good, for she was now more hopeful of the Queen's granting a pardon to her friend, Lady Jane Grey, forgetting that the Duchess was in disgrace on account of her marriage.

'I think I can guess what has brought her grace to London just now,' she said, when Mildred came to sit with her. 'She has come to remind the Queen of the warm friendship which always existed between her mother and Queen Catharine of Arragon, and that they are now the only two Spanish ladies in England.'

'Is the Duchess a Spanish lady?' asked Mildred. 'I have always heard that she was such an earnest Protestant.'

'Yes, she is; but still she is as much a Spaniard as our Queen. Her mother was Mary of Salines, who came from Spain with the Princess Catharine, and she was the faithful friend of the poor Queen through all her troubles. The Duchess was named Catharine, after the Queen, and the young Princess Mary, after the favourite maid of honour.'

‘And now the Duchess is a most thorough Protestant, in spite of her Spanish descent and the traditions of her family and early education!’ exclaimed Mildred.

‘Yes, like Anne Askew, the Duchess has embraced the new faith from her own convictions of its truth. But I wonder whether the Queen will be moved by the Duchess’ appeal. I feel sure she has been, or is going, to the Queen; and she will plead for Bishop Latimer, too, I know. Mildred, have you told Martin of the change in religion?’ suddenly asked Cecily.

‘I have been obliged to tell him something of it; for he asked me one day if the mass had not been set up again, and when I answered yes, he said, “I knew it—have known it all along, although you have been trying to hide it from me.”’

‘O Mildred, it would have been better to have told him at first, and have made your escape,’ said Cecily.

‘I am not sure about that, dear. If everybody thought only of their own safety and ran away—well, that would be impossible, you know, for there would certainly be some who, because of poverty and other reasons, could not go; and so, for the sake of these, we cannot all run away from England.’

A few days afterward, however, Mildred began to think that Cecily might be right after all; for her friend, Dame Amy Taylor, whose husband was rector of St. Leonard’s in East Chepe, came to her in great trouble; for an order had been issued forbidding any married priest to take any part in divine

service. Master Taylor, although a Protestant at heart, had conformed to the new order of things, abolished the English service, and set up the altar and mass; but it had not availed him much, for he had now been served with an inhibition from the bishop, and was not to officiate in his own church again.

‘It seems a pity that he ever wounded his conscience by conforming at all,’ said Mildred, who was inwardly wondering whether this would be the only blow aimed at the married clergy.

‘I am afraid the worst of this persecution is yet to come,’ sighed Dame Taylor, as if in answer to Mildred’s thoughts. ‘Have you heard that there are more than sixty Protestants now in prison?’

‘I am afraid Dame Scrope has shut herself up out of all knowledge of the actual state of things,’ said Cecily, in whose chamber they were sitting.

‘Oh, it is very dreadful. Dame Grafton, the printer’s wife, came to see Master Taylor yesterday. Her husband is still in prison, and she knows not what to do. She hoped that at the coronation, when the general pardon was proclaimed, he and Master Whitchurch would be released, but there were so many exceptions made this time as never was heard of before.’

‘What is their offence?’ asked Cecily.

‘They are Protestants, and have printed the Bibles and other Protestant books.’

‘I don’t think a single Protestant was released at the coronation. All other offences against law

and order were forgiven, but not that of unbelief in the mass,' said Cecily.

'But if we are all to be imprisoned for not believing that—and few do believe it as they once did—what will be the end of this?' asked Mildred.

Dame Taylor shook her head. 'We have seen but the beginning as yet, and even now we are all liable to be imprisoned, it seems.'

'I am afraid we are all sadly forgetting Protestant faith in our fear,' said Mildred. 'We forget that God cares for us as tenderly as we care for our little children. Do you remember telling me this one day, Cecily? I have never forgotten it, and when I begin to feel afraid now, I whisper to myself I am God's little child; I cannot understand what He is doing any more than my little ones can understand the meaning of a good deal that goes on around them every day; and I have to believe, too, that God can sometimes do better without our help in saving the world. We have lived in such a fuss and drive—going to hear sermons at Paul's Cross, then to read in the churches and teach the little ones "Our Father" and the "Credo," that we have begun to think we are going to save the world, and have thought more of Master Ridley and Latimer, and what they taught, than of God Himself.'

'But I don't understand you. Don't you think God means us to do all we can to save our fellow-men?' asked Dame Taylor.

'Yes, yes, indeed I do; and I think we have tried to do it; but we have been so anxious and careful, as though we loved the world better than God Himself does, though He gave His Son to die

for it. We have sometimes acted as though God did not care at all—as though He were not to be trusted to take care of the Protestant Church of England. What was it but this fear—this forgetfulness of God's love—that made many good men, like Master Ridley, so anxious to take the choice of a Queen into their own hands? and poor Lady Jane is the innocent victim.'

Cecily could only look at her friend in silent amazement as she said this. Could this be the Mildred who was almost paralysed with fear at the *thought* of trial, now that it had really come, speaking like this? They were no vain words, either, she knew; for she went about her household duties in the same spirit of calm trust; so that Martin had told her he only felt able to rest and be at peace when he saw his dear wife's calm, placid face, and that, gazing at her, he seemed to catch something of her trustfulness. Truly it was wonderful to Cecily, but it helped her to believe that if God could thus uphold one soul in the midst of such trials, surely He could take care of the work of the world, although every power of the earth now seemed fighting against it.

Cecily often wished she could be as calm and restful as her friend now was, for both she and Martin Scrope constantly tormented themselves with fears and anxieties as to what the next day or hour might bring upon them. Doubtless their feeble state of health had something to do with this, and this wearing fear reacted on their health, and prevented their entire recovery; so that they both remained invalids during the whole winter.

The town talk now was nothing but the Queen's projected marriage with the Prince of Spain ; and there was scarce a citizen but felt himself called upon to say his word against it. She would deliver the nation over to foreign bondage, said some. ' We shall sink into an appanage of Spain, and lose our place among the nations of Europe,' grumbled others ; while the fear of many more was, that with Philip would be introduced the hated Inquisition, to suppress the Reformed faith. One Parliament had been dismissed because they opposed the Queen's wishes in this matter, and Gardiner himself fell into disgrace, too, for the whole nation were united in opposing this marriage ; but nothing could turn the Queen from her purpose. At last another mad scheme was attempted in the name of Protestantism, with the avowed object of dethroning the Queen and placing the Princess Elizabeth in her place.

With an infatuation almost incredible, considering that his daughter was still a prisoner in the Tower, the Duke of Suffolk was one of the ring-leaders, and attempted to raise a rebellion in the midland counties, while Sir Thomas Wyatt led the men of Kent. By the time they had reached Deptford Wyatt was at the head of fifteen thousand men ; and here he demanded that the Queen and her Council should be given to his custody. The Spanish ambassadors had been obliged to take to flight the moment the marriage treaty had been signed ; but the articles of this treaty were pretty well known—the most obnoxious of which was, that Philip of Spain was to aid Mary in the government

of her kingdom, and this the bold men of Kent resented as an attempt to force them under a foreign yoke.

The rebel demands not being complied with, they marched forward and attempted to besiege London. The consternation of the citizens was something unheard of, and all day long was a stream of wagons and tumbrels laden with household stuff and merchandise passing through the eastern gate near the Scropes' house, while crowds of people followed, crying and groaning at having to turn out of their homes in mid-winter, and seek a shelter they knew not where.

Martin was able to move about the house on crutches now, and began to think he had better follow his neighbours' example, and try to take his family to Edendale for safety, when news came that the rebels had turned away from London Bridge, and that the Duke of Norfolk was rallying his forces to meet them in open battle. At the same time came the news that the insurrection under Suffolk had been put down, and the Duke taken prisoner. Some said he had proclaimed his daughter as Queen Jane in several towns; but whether this was so or not, Cecily feared that by his rashness he had sealed the doom of his daughter and her husband.

The fate of Wyatt and his brave followers was of secondary importance now that her dear friend's fate trembled in the balance, and when news came that the rebels had made their way to Westminster and were laying siege to the palace, it did not seem to Cecily that her friends there could be in such danger as that lonely girl in the Tower, who,

probably, knew nothing of what was going forward, but for which she would probably have to suffer.

A few hours of painful anxiety, and then came the news that the rebels had been beaten, their leaders and many others taken prisoners, and the rest dispersed. Men could breathe more freely now, and joke about the danger that was past, but Cecily's anxiety grew intense as to the probable fate of the prisoners in the Tower. The Duke of Suffolk was now in the same prison as his daughter. His fate was certain, but still the Queen would surely pardon the innocent girl in whose name so much wrong had been done. Yes; Cecily admitted to herself that it was wrong to attempt to dethrone Queen Mary, for most of her subjects looked upon her as their rightful sovereign, and they could not break their allegiance to her without doing violence to their own conscience; and in the estimation of many, even among the Protestants, such an act would be a violation of the constitution of the land, and the opening of the flood-gates of anarchy and civil war.

Cecily was not long kept in suspense concerning Lady Jane Grey. On the 8th of February, 1554, one of Lady Jane's servants came to tell Mistress Temple that the Queen's confessor had been that day to inform her beloved mistress that she was to die by the headsman's axe the next morning. Although Cecily had been expecting some such message, it came so suddenly at last that she fell back fainting, and it was some time before she could be restored to consciousness.

Mistress Tylney, Lady Jane's maid, sat weeping by her side when she again opened her eyes, and that brought back to Cecily's mind the cruel tidings she had heard; but she did not faint again. 'Tell me all, and then go back to her,' she whispered feebly.

'My angelic mistress was far less affected at the tidings than you or I, for she has long looked forward to this ending and no other,' said the weeping maid; 'Master Fechenham talked long with her on the evil of heresy, and has promised to obtain a reprieve from the Queen to give her time to repent of her errors; but my Lady Jane has no desire for this now.'

'I believe if she would profess herself a Roman Catholic, the Queen would grant her a pardon even now,' said Cecily.

'She never will do that; for she has written a sharp letter to Dr. Harding, blaming him for going to mass.'

'No; I am sure the Lady Jane is too sincere a Protestant, and too truthful a Christian, to save her life by dissimulation; but still, if she were to profess herself a Catholic, the Queen could have no excuse for putting her to death. Now she will, doubtless, say it is necessary for the stability of her throne, since she has been put forward as the hope of the Protestants.'

'But it is the Princess Elizabeth this time,' said Mistress Tylney; 'and I hear she is expected at the Tower.'

'The Princess Elizabeth to be imprisoned!' exclaimed Cecily. 'Had she anything to do with the late insurrection?'

‘No more than my beloved mistress had with proclaiming herself Queen. But I may not stay talking longer. I am anxious to be with the Lady Jane,’ said Mistress Tylney, rising.

But Lady Jane was not executed the next morning. Fechenham obtained a reprieve for three days, and during this time the Queen sent not only her own confessor, but several other Roman Catholic priests, to dispute with her on the genuineness of the faith in which she had been educated; but no Protestant was allowed to go near her. Lady Jane begged to be allowed to spend the few remaining hours of her life in private devotion, and preparation for the last dread scene that awaited her; but Mary was too anxious that she should follow the example of her father-in-law, and die professing the Romish faith, to accede to her request.

So the last days of her life were harassed with theological disputes, but her faith never faltered. Speaking of some of these disputations, an old writer says: ‘Divers learned Roman Catholics—those of the best fame and reputation—were sent unto her to dissuade her from that true profession of the Gospel which from her cradle she had ever held, each striving by art, by flattery, by threatening, by promise of life, or whatever else might move most strongly in the bosom of a weak woman, who should become master of so great and worthy a prize; but all their labours were bootless, for she had art to confound their art, wisdom to withstand their flatteries, resolution above their menaces, and such a true knowledge of life that death was to her no other than a familiar acquaintance.’

These last words certainly seemed to be true, for on that dismal Monday morning, when the weeping crowd on Tower Hill saw her stand calm and unmoved, with her sorrowing maids around her, the gentle and beautiful girl looked at the grim executioner and his gleaming axe without a quiver of fear. A few minutes before she had seen her husband pass on his way to execution, and as she came to the scaffold she had been met by the cart bearing his headless body. She had sent a message to him just before, reminding him that their separation was almost over, and she stood calmly before the terrible messenger that would in a moment send her whither he had gone.

Her clear, silvery voice could be heard speaking, but the sobs of the crowd prevented them from hearing her first words; but her voice grew stronger as she went on, and the sobs were hushed, so that they could hear her say, 'I pray you all, good Christian people, to bear me witness that I die a true Christian woman, and that I look to be saved by none other means but only by the mercy of God in the merits of the blood of His only Son Jesus Christ!' Then the sobs broke out afresh, and amid the weeping and lamentations of the crowd her eyes were bound, and, kneeling down, she laid her head upon the block, and the next minute stood in the presence of her Saviour. This was the tragedy that inaugurated 'Black Monday'—the name given to this day, and long remembered by the citizens of London.



CHAPTER XVII.

NEWS FROM EDENDALE.

MILDRED feared that the death of Lady Jane Grey would be such a severe blow to Cecily that she would sink into rapid decline ; but, to everybody's surprise, after the first bewildering effects of her grief were over she grew more calm and peaceful than she had been for months before ; and yet there seemed no better outlook for her friends of the Reformed doctrines.

Early in March a sad procession passed their house and through the city gate on its way to Oxford. Archbishop Cranmer, with Bishops Ridley and Latimer, were taken from the Tower, condemned to be burned ; and that the whole country might be the more effectually warned of the danger incurred by professing the Reformed doctrines, they were to be burned in different places.

A few hours after, the streets having been cleared of the sorrowing people who had come to look their last at the noble leaders of the Reformed faith, Rupert Audley rode through the city gate on one of his father's stout horses, and soon made his way to the parsonage.

Rupert was now a man, thoughtful beyond his years, and his father had entrusted him with the difficult task of warning his sister of the dangers that surrounded her. Mildred had succeeded for a time in hiding her trouble from those at home. She had told them of Martin's accident, but not a word about his being deprived of his living, or that they now had only his small patrimony for their maintenance : not a word of that had been mentioned in her home letters ; and for a few weeks the Audleys remained in ignorance of the change in religious matters. But at length Father Ambrose, the old Catholic priest, who had always retained some influence over the people through the confessional, had boldly presented himself to them as their parish priest again.

'Father never had a harder day's work to do, I know, than when the Queen's letter came bidding him, as justice of the peace, stop all public reading of the Scriptures,' said Rupert, as he told the story of the change of religion in the country.

'Poor father ! I never thought of him, and how hard it would be for him to reconcile his duty to God and his duty to the Queen.'

'Ah, that was where the shoe pinched, Mildred ; his sworn duty to the Queen's Grace to maintain peace and order, and the enforcement of her commands. At first he said he would not do it ; he could not turn out Master Boyne, who was to him as a son, and who had preached a pure gospel to the parish, and put in an ignorant old hedge priest, who could only mumble over the Latin prayers and recite a few legends of the saints.'



'THEY'D CROWD AROUND WHEN WE WENT TO READ.'—See page 186.

once; he felt obliged to go as a magistrate; but mother—poor mother—she goes regularly enough, hoping to screen the rest of us from the old priest's displeasure by her performance of duty.'

'Poor father and mother, it must be hard for them to go back to the old Latin prayers that they cannot understand, and hear the stories that we used to laugh at when we were growing up.'

'I hope you pity us, too—Dick and me—for we shall miss Father Boyne more than anybody else, I think. He was teaching us all sorts of things. I can now read as well as you, Mildred, and before they took the Bible away out of the church Dick and I used to go up twice or three times a week to read to a few of the knaves in the village; they felt shy of Master Boyne, but they'd crowd round when we went to read.'

'And now it is all over,' said Cecily with a sigh.

'Yes; they would not leave the great Bible even in father's hands,' said Rupert. 'Now you must tell me some London news,' he went on, 'for mother will want to hear all about everything when I go home. I fancy London must be safer than the country now, for there are so many people in the streets the bishops can't know everybody.'

Mildred laughed. 'I suppose we are all apt to think we can hide better in another place than just where we happen to be. I have thought sometimes that in quiet Edendale we might escape some troubles that are sure to fall upon us here; but I may be mistaken.'

'There is no safety in Edendale now,' said



'THEY'D CROWD AROUND WHEN WE WENT TO READ.'—See page 186.

Rupert. 'The prior has come back, and several of the monks, and—and—well, there are strange tales about the Priory whispered in the village now.'

'What tales?' asked Cecily. 'I had some thought of journeying home, if the Queen will allow me to retire from court.'

'Better not, Mistress Temple, unless you are prepared to go to mass and give up the Priory to its former owners: for that is what the ghost wants, it seems.'

'The ghost! so they have a ghost at my old home now.'

'Yes; my father says it is a trick of the monks to frighten you into giving up the land and going to mass.'

'Then I think I had better stay in London; for I cannot give up my father's hard-earned property, and I will not to go to mass—no, not even to please Queen Mary, although I cannot help loving her sometimes, in spite of what she has done.'

'I had some thought of taking Martin to Edendale when the weather grew warm, and he could journey so far,' said Mildred.

'I am afraid to bid you come, Mildred,' said her brother; 'although I know that father and mother would be greatly pleased to see you.'

'And what of Kate?' asked Mildred.

'Father has been to see them, and warn them against coming, too; for although it is not certain that the monks or Father Ambrose could do anything against her for marrying, still their revived influence might make things unpleasant, and if

danger should come by-and-by they might track her, whereas no one near her new home knows that she was ever a nun.'

'It does not seem as though there was a shelter to be found anywhere,' said Mildred, in a tone of sadness.

'Mistress Temple has often urged us to go to Flanders, as so many have done; but I heard from Master Kasse yesterday that the people there, although they are Protestants, refuse to receive or help any that come from England, because we differ from them in our belief about the sacrament.'

'Why, what do they believe?' asked Rupert.

'They hold the Lutheran error of consubstantiation, which to me seems to differ but very little from the old one of transubstantiation—the doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass. Martin says that it is not strange that Luther held to this last ray of Romanism, but rather that he freed himself so far as he did. Most of our teachers and Reformers came from Geneva, or have learned the doctrine of Zwinglius, which makes the doctrine of the mass idolatry.'

'Well, I don't know much about these questions,' said Rupert; 'but if the Church of Rome is teaching the truth, as she professes, why are the Scriptures taken away as soon as she has the power to do it? This is not fair play, and every Englishman likes fair play.'

When Rupert went back to Edendale Cecily's maid went with him, to bring some books and clothes for her young mistress, with orders that one of the serving men should bring her back to Lon-

don. Cecily Temple had made up her mind to retire from the service of the Queen, since she could not retain this post without attending mass. Besides, as it now seemed safer to stay in London until her father came home from France, than to go to Edendale as she had once proposed, she resolved to remain with Mildred. What she would pay for the accommodation of herself and servants would help the family finances, and she might be able to help others, too. It was what her dear friend Lady Jane would have done had she been so fortunate as to be a private gentlewoman: and so Cecily took up this work as though it had been bequeathed to her by her friend.

Rupert was scarcely a day's journey from London when the blow fell which had so long been the nightmare of Dame Audley's life. In this same month of March the Queen's letter was published, commanding all bishops to deprive the married clergy of their livings, divorce them from their wives, and punish them for their illegal marriages.

Oh, the consternation and anguish that fell upon hundreds of English homes that March morning, when the Bishop, prompt enough to obey such a command, sent messengers bidding all the married clergymen within the diocese of London to appear before him, to do penance for their offence, and to renounce their wives!

Martin Scrope received the legal notice from the Bishop's messenger, and, before Mildred could know what had happened, had gone to his own little room, and, like Hezekiah of old, 'spread it before the

But here, alone, strength and courage alike forsook her, and for nearly an hour she knelt in dumb soul-agony before God—agony too great to find relief in words, even of prayer. But the Comforter was near, to strengthen the fainting, broken-hearted woman; and she went to Cecily again looking calm and resolved, but aged since she had left that room an hour before beyond the power of years to age any one.

Cecily rose to meet her, and took both her hands as she came in. ‘What is it, Mildred?’ she asked.

‘Just as Dame Taylor says. There is but one thing I can do—I must take the children, and go away, and never see my husband again. Do you think a messenger could overtake Rupert and bring him back?’ she asked.

‘But, Mildred, is not this decision a hasty one? Is there no other way?’ asked Cecily.

‘No; it is the only way of escape, Mistress Temple,’ answered Dame Taylor. ‘I have talked it over with my husband, and resolved to do the same thing. It is very hard, very bitter;’ and the grief-stricken woman burst into tears again as she spoke.

But Mildred stood dry-eyed, and not even the contagion of grief could give her the relief of tears yet. ‘Have you made any arrangements for the future?’ she asked of her friend, when that lady’s tears had somewhat subsided.

‘I have not thought about anything yet, only that I must leave John,’ she sobbed.

‘I,’ said Mildred, ‘must take my children, and

go to the old home again. Cecily, could we fetch Rupert back? He would travel more slowly, having your maid with him.'

'He has gone too far for any messenger to overtake him. Mildred, come and sit down;' and Cecily fetched one of the children and placed it on her lap.

Mildred smiled faintly. 'You do not think I need to be reminded of these,' she said, and she kissed the little upturned face; but there were no tears in her eyes.

'Go, and tell Deb I want her,' she said, setting the child on the floor.

'What do you want, Mildred? You must let me help you now. I am quite well and strong again,' said her friend.

'Thank you, Cecily; you will help me—I know you will; stay and take care of Martin for me, and do not let him miss us more than is necessary.'

'And you—what are you going to do?' asked Cecily.

'I—I am going away—now—to-day. I can never see Martin any more.'

'And Martin—does he agree to this?'

'He knows my resolution. It is the only thing we can do.' And, Deborah appearing at this moment, Mildred told her that she wanted her to help pack up the children's clothes, as she was going to take them away into the country.



CHAPTER XVIII.

A SCENE IN EAST CHEPE CHURCH.

DAME TAYLOR went home to make preparations for her departure, and Mildred began her work. But Deborah's noisy, clumsy way of opening closets and chests created such a bustle in the house that Martin soon left his room to see what the unusual stir was about.

Cecily told him at once of Mildred's determination not to see him again, which astonished him much more than the dreadful news had surprised his wife. 'This cannot, must not be, Cecily ; and you must help me,' he said.

'But I thought it was the only way of escape.'

'Escape ! do you call such torture as this must involve, escape ? Better a prison and death at the stake, as we are threatened with, than that I should voluntarily doom my wife and children to the shame and disgrace this compromise would bring upon them.'

'But I do not see that any shame or disgrace can fall upon Mildred or the children,' said Cecily.

'What ! not if I renounce my marriage, and declare it to be illegal, and against the law of God ?' said Martin.

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‘But they never would require you to do that,’ said Cecily.

‘I am sure they would. We should be required to profess absolute repentance, and then perform public penance, as though our marriage had been a crime. Where is Mildred?’ he asked. Cecily pointed to the door of a store closet, where Mildred had, doubtless, heard every word he had said quite plainly.

Cecily felt now that, as Martin said, there was no escape that way for him—that prison and death would be preferable to such a compromise as Mildred had thought of; she therefore called Deborah away from her packing, and sent her downstairs; then she went to the children herself, leaving the husband and wife once more together.

An hour or two later they both came down to the sitting room, still looking very anxious; but the terrible agony had passed out of Mildred’s face, and Cecily saw, to her relief, that she had been crying. ‘Martin has convinced me that I cannot do as I proposed; it would bring a fate worse than death upon our children,’ she whispered.

‘Could not Martin go away somewhere?’ suggested Cecily; he could by so doing avoid replying to this summons.’

‘O Martin, you might go to Kate for a little while,’ said Mildred eagerly; ‘I will stay here with the children, and then they will know we are separated, and perhaps by-and-by you will be able to come back. There may be some change soon—surely the Queen will not continue this persecution much longer.’

‘What if she had determined to root out these Reformed doctrines?’ said Martin.

‘She will never do that, I am certain,’ said Cecily; ‘but now let us talk of this new plan. What do you think of going to Oxford, Martin?’

‘I think it is worth trying. If I am caught I can but be brought back to prison, and that is certain to be my fate if I stay here, unless I appear to the summons and deny my right to marry.’

The preparations for Martin’s departure from home were soon made, and just before the city gate closed a horseman in the dress of a gentleman’s servant passed through, and took the road to Stratford, where he rested that night, but was on horseback again by dawn.

At the end of a week a farm servant rode back to London on the same horse, bringing a letter to the Aldgate parsonage that was as healing balm to Mildred’s overburdened heart. Her husband was safe at her sister’s, and, to prevent suspicion, was going to work about the farm and garden until he was strong enough to travel farther or the persecution ceased.

The Aldgate parsonage had become a refuge now for the deserted wives of those clergymen who had fled from London, and among them was Dame Amy Taylor, whose husband had obeyed the summons of the bishops to appear before the vicar general. Only one besides Master Taylor had ventured to obey that summons, and the sentence had been just what Martin anticipated. They were deprived of their benefices in a legal and formal fashion, which had not been previously done. They were then for-

bidden to live with their wives, and the marriage was declared null and void.

But the most bitter and cruel ceremony, and the one Martin Scrope had left London to escape, was deferred to the middle of May. Nothing could deter Dame Taylor from going to witness it. Cecily and Mildred both tried to persuade the poor, grief-stricken woman not to do this, but she begged and pleaded so hard—she must see her husband's face once more. She could not see him again after this, for sentence of divorce had been pronounced against them; but she might go to the church where they had so often worshipped God, and where he was now to perform penance for his marriage, as for a crime against public morals.

As Dame Amy insisted upon going, Cecily said she and old Gillian would go with her; for they were afraid to let her go alone, and Mildred thought it would be unwise for her to be recognized in the church as the wife of another clergyman, who had escaped doing this shameful penance.

As the three quiet women made their way past the merchants' stalls in Chepe toward the church of East Chepe, several of them recognised Dame Taylor, and words of kindly sympathy were spoken by many.

'We never thought it would come to this—to separate husband and wife, when they have been lawfully married,' said a kind-hearted silk mercer; and then he silently put several crowns into Dame Taylor's hand.

A few steps farther on, and another friend stopped them. 'Now, you know I never was carried away by the fuss and fashion of these new doctrines;

but I'll say this for the Gospellers, that they never tried to do anybody else any harm. It was a fair and square thing they asked us to do—to go and read the Bible for ourselves, and see whether what they said was true. The old Church of Rome professed to have got their teaching from the same book, but if they did, why not let us have the prayers in English, that we may know what is being said, and leave the Bibles in the churches, too? Englishmen can be trusted to judge what is fair and honest, I trow. Dame Taylor, I'm sorry for you, and I wish I could help you. I don't understand the quarrel much now; but I'll think more of it.'

It seemed that a good many were going to 'think more of it;' for when they reached the church they found it very full, and it was with some difficulty that they made their way to a quiet corner where they could see without being seen. Dame Taylor recognized many of her old friends among the congregation, but she did not wish to be seen herself, and Cecily sat so as to screen her as much as possible.

At last the vestry door opened, and a train of priests wended their way into the nave of the church, closely followed by the penitent, who, in a long white robe, and bearing a lighted candle in his hand, took the appointed place before the whole congregation.

'O my husband, my husband!' gasped Dame Taylor, as the bowed, worn figure of the penitent was seen.

'Hush, hush! you must be calm!' whispered Cecily, and Dame Amy was calm while mass was

performed and the *Miserere* chanted. Then came the spectacle of the day, when the poor, weak, cowardly priest was made to forswear his wife, and declare that he had sinned against God and His laws, and that his pretended marriage with Amy German was a crime against holy Church and public morals, for which he now heartily repented.

The poor discarded wife listened with some degree of calmness until her husband mentioned her name, and then a piercing, agonized shriek rang through the church, and she was hurried out by Cecily and Gillian, but not before she had been recognized by several of the congregation.

They returned home to Aldgate as quickly as they could ; but Cecily, who was anxious to hear something of the court news just now, kept her ears open to the chatter of two gossips, one of whom professed to have heard what she told from Lady Russell, one of the Queen's maids of honour, whom Cecily knew would be aware of such matters. The betrothal ring had been sent by Prince Philip, but the Spanish ambassador had since *demandé* that the Princess Elizabeth should be tried and executed before his master came to England.

'Ah! and the Spaniard is not the poor lady's only enemy,' went on the woman ; 'for the Lord Chancellor says the land will never be free from plots and rebellion while the Lady Elizabeth is suffered to live.'

'And whose fault is it, forsooth, but the Chancellor's and our new Bishop Bonner? The new doctrines taught men to think for themselves, and when Englishmen learn that trick they won't be

driven like sheep by outlandish ambassadors and a cruel Lord Chancellor.'

'Be wary, dame, and talk not too loud of Gardiner,' said her friend, 'for he will show less mercy than the Queen. My Lady Russell was heard to say that when Gardiner urged the Queen to order the Lady Elizabeth's trial and execution, he said, "If every one went to work soundly as I do, things would go on better."'

'But why should Bishop Gardiner be so savage against the Lady Elizabeth?' asked her friend.

'The reason of that is plain enough. She is the hope of the Protestants, as Mary is of the Catholics.'

'But Protestants joined with the Catholics in proclaiming Mary the rightful Queen.'

'Yes, yes, we know all that,' retorted the other impatiently; 'but the Queen is not liked as she was at first, or there would not be all these rumours and scandals about her; and it is certain this Spanish marriage will offend the people still more. Have you heard that the Lady Elizabeth is to be moved soon from the Tower?'

'Then the Queen will pardon her after all?' said the other.

'No; she is to be the prisoner of Master Bedingfield, who will take her to some country house; for since a secret warrant was sent without the Queen's knowledge for her execution, not even the Tower is considered secure for her. You know the Lady Elizabeth goes to mass now?'

'No, indeed; and I will not believe it either,' said the friend.

‘You can please yourself about believing it; but I can tell you it is true enough. Doubtless it has been done to please the Queen, but—’

Cecily did not want to hear any more. She, like many another, had begun to fix her eyes upon the Lady Elizabeth as the one sole hope of the Reformation, and now she had failed like her friend, Lady Cecil, and so many others about the court.

Cecily felt almost sick at heart when she reached home, and poor Dame Taylor was quite ill. When, an hour or two later, Dame Hartipol, another friend of Mildred, came in, Cecily could not refrain from telling her something of what she had heard in the street about the Princess Elizabeth and her going to mass.

‘And you will have to do it, too, Mistress Cecily, or worse will befall you,’ said Dame Hartipol, but colouring as she spoke.

Cecily looked astonished. ‘Dame Askew would not yield and bow down in this idolatrous worship,’ she said quickly; ‘and you—you, good dame, braved danger and death in those days, I have heard, to shelter that noble martyr.’

‘Yes, yes; and I would do it again an the Lord called me to help any of His people; but—but I know other folks, better and more learned than I am, and those that hate the mummary and idolatry of the mass as much as I do, who yet go in their bodies, while their spirits are far away, or joining, in the English service that used to be held a short time ago, while their lips are repeating the Latin words they don’t understand.’

But Cecily shook her head gravely. ‘I do not

think this can be right—it is bowing the knee to Baal,’ she said.

Dame Hartipol looked half offended. ‘I am a good many years older than you,’ she said, ‘and have discoursed about this thing with those who are wiser. It was but yesterday I was talking to Master West, who was steward to our good Bishop Ridley, and he holds this opinion, that our bodies may be present at the mass, and so long as our spirits do not consent to it, we are not guilty of idolatry.’

‘Not guilty of idolatry?’ repeated Cecily; ‘but what of untruth? Can Master West be happy—can he reconcile this to his conscience?’

‘Well, he has written to his master, and urged him to recant and escape the horrible death that awaits him. My dear child, hundreds like Master West and me go to mass now, who do not believe in it any more than you do. I have even now been talking to Dame Scrope about it, urging her to go for the sake of her children, and to make her husband’s escape secure.’

‘I am sure Martin would rather endure anything than that Mildred should deny God. He refused to deny her, and she cannot be so faithless for his sake,’ said Cecily quickly, and with a touch of anger.

‘My dear child, Dame Scrope must think of the safety of her family. Her husband has escaped for the time, but I have little doubt this house is watched by spies, and if ever he attempts to return he will be taken.’

‘Do you really think this house is watched?’ asked Cecily anxiously.

‘I am almost sure of it, and, my dear child, when the Prince of Spain is here we shall hardly be able to trust each other, if this persecution is to continue.’

Cecily shuddered. ‘You do not think the Queen will allow that horrible Inquisition to be set up in England?’ she asked.

‘It will not be called the Inquisition, or the Holy Office, as it is in Spain; but—I am afraid the system will be the same, and it will be better to be free of suspicion before that time comes. Now, be warned in time, and, before your absence from church is noticed, follow the example of your neighbours and go to mass.’

‘Dame Hartipol, I cannot—it would be doing evil that good might come. And we, at least, ought to take warning by what happened last year, when many good men, like Cranmer and Ridley, thought to take care of the Reformation by passing over the rightful Queen and setting another in her place.’

‘Yes, yes; I own that was a mistake,’ said Dame Hartipol with a sigh.

‘It is always a mistake to think that evil can bring good to any one or in any cause. Would it not be better to have one’s body in prison, with freedom to lift one’s heart in gladness to God, than to walk abroad in the world with a burdened conscience and fear, instead of gladness filling our hearts at the thought of God being ever present with us?’

‘But, my dear, you must think of the times in which we live. God knows how weak we are.’

‘Yes; and He will strengthen us and fill us with a joyful sense of His presence if we seek it. Dear dame, have I not heard that Anne Askew was full of all joyfulness even in her prison?’

‘Yes, yes; but you would not have us all follow her example, noble as it was?—you would not urge any to throw themselves into the fire?’

Cecily shook her head. ‘These are not the days for martyrs, I fear, and there will be none to follow noble Anne Askew if all I have heard be true.’

‘And would you have men and women fling their lives away?’ demanded Dame Hartipol, rather tartly.

‘No, I would take all lawful care to avoid danger—everything short of denying God—and it is denying Him to fall down and worship a piece of bread that the baker has made. God is a jealous God, and will not give His glory to another, even though it be claimed by the priest in His name; and by His help I will never go to mass again,’ concluded Cecily.

Dame Hartipol did not attempt to continue the discussion. She felt annoyed with Cecily for what she had said, and soon after took her leave.





CHAPTER XIX.

A WONDERFUL SURPRISE.

CECILY'S restored health compelled her to return to her duties at court, where she hoped to be able to assist her friends by obtaining employment for them as embroiderers to the Queen and her ladies. She told Mildred that she should not retain her post long, but in the letters just received from her father he urged her to stay in the service of the Queen until his return, or at least until the question of the Church lands was settled; and now she was so much better, she had no excuse for absenting herself. She half hoped, half feared, that her refusal to attend mass would procure her instant dismissal; but when she reached Whitehall she found, to her surprise, that Sir Edward Underhill, who was well known to be a 'hot Gospeller' still retained his post, and he welcomed Cecily back with a word of encouragement not to wound her conscience by attending mass.

'Well, truly, Master Underhill, this world seems to be getting in a worse tangle than ever,' said Cecily; 'I have heard that all about the court have been compelled to go to mass, and many outside

who truly love the better way are now doing so out of fear of what may follow.'

The good man shook his head: 'The Queen has evil and cruel counsellors about her, but she is not so cruel as some would have us think.'

'Is this story I hear about the Lady Elizabeth true?' asked Cecily.

'That she has sent by Martin Bedingsfield for an English Bible to be allowed her?' asked Underhill.

'No, indeed; I hear she has gone to mass.'

'I don't believe it, Mistress Temple. I know the Queen is anxious for her conversion, for her Grace is a true and devout Catholic. No, no; we have little to fear from the Queen's Grace, but everything from Gardiner and my lord Bishop of London and this Spanish ambassador.'

'And things will not be mended by the coming of the Prince of Spain, I fear,' said Cecily.

'Well, well, he cannot do much harm, I trow; let us trust in God and our true English Parliament,' said Sir Edward Underhill hopefully.

But Cecily shook her head. 'I can hope in God, but not in the Parliament,' she said. 'Have you ever thought of it, Master Underhill, that nearly all those of the House of Lords are holders of Church property? and to hold this still, they will sacrifice anything and everything else.'

'They are nearly all Protestants,' said her friend; 'they passed the laws establishing the English Protestant Church.'

'And they will pass other laws, handing it over to the Pope again, if only they may retain their lands.'

‘I don’t think it, Mistress Temple,’ said the sternly upright old man, who lived in the midst of enemies constantly on the watch for some failing, but able to find nothing with which to charge him except in the matter of his faith, and that the Queen permitted him to exercise according to his own conscience. ‘I don’t think Englishmen will ever consent to the Pope assuming the sway in these days. The fact is, we never have been obedient subjects of the Pope. We struggled against him in William’s time, and under the first Edward and the last Henry.’

‘We shall not struggle much now. The only struggle will be for the abbey lands, and if the Pope is willing to yield that point, they will let him have the supremacy of the Church. You don’t think it, but I know it,’ added Cecily bitterly; for she knew it was to insure his hold of the Priory that her father was so anxious that she should return to the service of the Queen.

She succeeded in obtaining employment for Mildred and her friends at the Aldgate parsonage, for preparations were now being made for the Queen’s marriage with the Prince of Spain, who was expected to arrive at Southampton about the middle of July.

The wedding was to take place at Winchester, and the Queen with her ladies retired to Farnham, a few miles from Winchester, to await the coming of the dreaded bridegroom; for so great was the detestation felt by all classes for the expected husband of their Queen that the children in their play fought over it, and one little fellow, personating

Prince Philip, had a narrow escape from being hung by his companions. The Queen's ladies laughed when they heard of this, but Cecily was too anxious to laugh, for at the same time she heard of the flight of her friend, the Duchess of Suffolk, from England, and the seizure of all her property by the orders of Gardiner and the Council.

Thinking of those living in the Duchess' house at Aldgate, Cecily wrote to Mildred, directing her to go with her friends to the Priory at Edendale; but she heard soon afterward that, being the Queen's embroiderers they had been left undisturbed, lest the work should be hindered.

That Philip's death was prayed for is a most undoubted fact, but the 'mussel shells' of Spain bore him safely to England, and the very day he was married to Mary of England his father ceded to him the crown of Naples; so that he was king—and they were hailed as King Philip and Queen Mary, though some persisted in shouting Mary and Philip.

That very many were suspicious of him Philip well knew, for some thousands of Spaniards who had come with him were not even allowed to land; but Philip concealed his resentment, and seemed most anxious to please everybody, especially the members of the Council.

Cecily was rather surprised to find that King Philip was not the fierce, black-visaged man she had expected to see. Her first glimpse of him was when he paid a private visit to the Queen, two days before the wedding. The royal couple were walking in the garden in the bright moonlight, and then Cecily saw that his complexion was like Mary's, and his

hair the same colour—sandy or red. But the expression of his face was dark and gloomy, and he was by no means handsome, although extremely haughty-looking.

Those who had gone to Southampton to welcome the Prince in the Queen's name brought back a strange tale of nearly a hundred chests being brought ashore and taken at once to the castle; and it was whispered that these were full of gold.

'Full of gold!' repeated Cecily when she heard the tale; 'what will the King do with it, think you?'

I know what is *said* about it,' whispered Mistress Jane Dormer, 'and by a right gallant knight of King Philip's train, too; but I would not believe it then, although I greatly fear it now.'

'What do you fear?' asked Cecily.

'That our Spanish Prince means to be King of England as well as Naples, and bind us in golden fetters.'

'Do you mean he will buy the Council and the Parliament?' inquired Cecily, almost aghast.

Her companion nodded. 'And, what is more, I fear the Queen will be only too willing,' she whispered. 'Philip will more than *aid* our mistress in the government of her kingdom—he will rule it for her.'

'And small mercy he will show us of the Reformed faith. I scarce know which I dread most, Jane, King Philip or his chosen friend, the Duke of Alva, who is always clapping his hand to his sword as though he longed to draw it upon somebody.'

'He is more handsome than King Philip.'

'And more cruel, if it be possible,' said Cecily.

‘But who is this Flemish knight they call “William the Silent” ? Cannot the man speak ?’

Mistress Dormer laughed. ‘Speak ?’ yes, indeed ; but it is said he possesses a secret that may cost King Philip his crown, and that Philip fears him more than any man besides.’

‘Then there is the Count de Feria—what do you think of this Spanish knight, Jane ?’ asked Cecily, with an arch smile.

Jane Dormer crimsoned, but retorted quickly, ‘He is a worthy man, although a Spaniard ; but since you see the Count de Feria so much, what have you to say to his friend, Count Pedro Cazalla ?’

Cecily turned her head aside, but there was a pained look in her face as she said, ‘I wish I did not see him so often.’

‘And wherefore not ? The Queen would not be angered, Cecily.’

‘I was not thinking of the Queen, Jane, but—but—I think I shall ask the Queen’s leave to retire from court very soon.’

‘And wherefore should you do that—because a chivalrous knight has bent the knee to you more frequently than to any other of the Queen’s ladies ? Now tell me, Mistress Temple, what you think of this black-visaged knight ? Do you share the opinion of the vulgar crowd, and think that every Spaniard has a tail which he hides in his trunk-hose ?’

‘No, indeed !’ laughed Cecily. ‘But Count Cazalla can never be more than a friend to me, and with that he will not be content.’

‘And he has told you that already ? Well, truly the Count has lost no time,’ laughed Jane Dormer.

‘But wherefore should you refuse him, Cecily, for it is easy to see that you like him?’

‘Yes, truly, I could, if it were not the difference in our faith.’

‘And why should you let that come between you, when you know the Queen is so anxious for your conversion?’

‘Jane, we have argued enough about this. If any one could convert me to a belief in Romanism, it would be the Queen or you; but having tasted the sweetness of God’s Word, I cannot go back to these beggarly errors of Romanism; and, being a Spaniard, of course Senor Cazalla must be a Catholic.’

‘You have not spoken of the difference in your faith to the Count, I suppose?’

‘Not yet, but I mean to do it despite the consequences, for it may be he will tell the King that one of the Queen’s ladies is a heretic.’

‘No, no; he will not do that,’ said Jane.

‘I am not so sure, for the Spaniards are all such bigoted Catholics that he might think any measures justifiable to save my soul. But still I must risk it, and then Cazalla will see the impossibility of a union.’

‘But, Cecily, tell me this. If the Count were a Protestant, or you a Catholic, would you do the same?’

‘No,’ answered Cecily promptly; ‘for although I have known the Count but a few weeks, he is, I am sure, a high-souled, noble, generous man; and—’

‘That is enough, Cecily,’ laughed her friend. ‘Now let us see if we cannot get over this religious difficulty. Since the Princess Elizabeth has

been converted to the true faith I do not despair of you.'

'The Princess Elizabeth?' exclaimed Cecily. 'But I will not believe it, Jane. I cannot. There was a report spread before that she had gone to mass.'

'Well, it is not false this time, for Master Beddingfield has sent to inform the Queen that the Lady Elizabeth has given up the English service, and now goes to mass; has ordered that the service shall be in Latin, and has confessed to a friar.'

'O Jane, is it possible?' said Cecily sadly.

'Possible? Yes, and sensible, too,' said her friend. 'The Princess is coming to court now, to share in the gay doings. 'Tis whispered, too, that she will marry the Prince of Savoy.'

'Of course the Queen is pleased at her sister's conversion?' said Cecily.

'Pleased? She is delighted, and most devoutly thankful; for the Protestants cannot put her forward as the hope of their party, now that she is a Catholic.'

Cecily shook her head. 'The Queen has no more loyal subjects than the Protestants,' she said; 'and if they were but permitted to worship God after their own conscience, and read the Scriptures as formerly, they would trouble the realm but little, and evil-minded men would have no excuse to incite the people to rebel in their name.'

'That may be all very well, Mistress Cecily, but we are wandering from the point. Let me ask you this—whether you really mean to refuse the Count Cazalla on account of this difference in your faith?'

'Of course, I do. How can I do otherwise?'

‘Then you will offend the King and Queen, for of course they will hear of it. O Cecily, surely you will not be so obstinate, now the Princess Elizabeth has yielded!’

But there was no time for Cecily to reply before the gentleman of whom they were talking appeared at the end of the alley where they were walking.

Cazalla, being in attendance upon King Philip, was often thrown into the society of the Queen’s maids, and this had been more particularly the case since the bride and bridegroom had retired to Richmond Palace. Truth to tell, he came to the garden now hoping to see Cecily, for he had made up his mind to know his fate at once, and Jane Dormer had no sooner left them than he entered upon the subject that lay nearest his heart.

But, to his surprise and dismay, Cecily drew her hand away when he would have taken it, and burst into tears.

‘What is it? Have I hurt you—wounded you by my haste and impatience?’

‘Oh no, no; it is not that, but—’ and Cecily stopped and looked round with a slight shiver.

‘I know what you would say, Mistress Cecily. English ladies are not wooed and won in this hot, hasty fashion. Pardon, pardon my presumption, and bid me wait a year—two years—only do not drive me from you without any hope. Bid me hope that one day—’

But Cecily shook her head. ‘No, no, there is no hope; there can be no hope for us,’ she said, and her head bent lower and her tears fell faster as she spoke.

‘What is it? what do you mean?’ asked the Spaniard. ‘I have a right to be answered—you must, you shall, tell me this. Have you been making a toy, a plaything of me because I am a stranger?’

‘Oh no, no, indeed; it is a pain to me to bid you leave; but I must—I must.’

The Count managed to raise her drooping head, and looked straight into her eyes with a look of triumph in his own. ‘You do, Cecily, you do love me,’ he said, with trembling earnestness.

‘Yes,’ she whispered; ‘I will tell you this, that you may know I have not trifled with you; but—but we must part now, and never meet again.’

‘But why, Cecily? You are trifling now,’ he said, drawing nearer to her as he spoke.

‘No, no, indeed I am not; but a gulf we neither can pass lies between us.’

The Spaniard started from her side and placed himself in front of her.

‘What do you mean?—are you married or betrothed to another?’

‘No, no; it is not that, but something that must separate us as surely—our faith,’ whispered Cecily.

She was prepared to see her lover look shocked, astonished; but if he had received a mortal stab he could not have recoiled from her with greater agony. He staggered aside to allow her to pass, his face convulsed with the violence of his emotion, while he muttered slowly, ‘Fool, fool that I am!’

Cecily was alarmed at the sudden change in him, and thought he must be ill. ‘Can I help you, or fetch help for you?’ she asked pityingly.

But he waved her off as she approached. ‘Don’t

come near me! don't touch me! the touch of a heretic will poison you!' he whispered hoarsely.

Cecily stared at him in still greater alarm. Surely he was losing his senses, and she once more approached him, saying, 'Senor, you are ill; let me fetch some one to you.'

But he only shook his head. 'Who would come near a heretic, when a woman refuses to have pity?' he said.

'But—but—I am the heretic,' whispered Cecily, 'not you.'

'You a heretic—you, too, Cecily!' exclaimed Cazalla, suddenly seizing her hands. 'Tell me that again! Tell me you have read the Bible which our priests forbid—that you dare to believe that Christ died once for all!'

'Is it possible that you can believe this—you a Spaniard?' said Cecily in a tone of eager astonishment.

'And you are one of Queen Mary's ladies? But I forgot our danger in my joy. Cecily, will you make an excuse not to go to the hunt to-morrow, and meet me here, and I will tell you my story—or, at least, the story of my family—and you shall decide then whether our faith must separate us.'

Cecily promised to meet him again, and then they parted, for the King and Queen were approaching.





CHAPTER XX.

IN THE PALACE GARDEN.

THERE was a most wonderful hunt the next day in Richmond Park, and all the court were eager to witness the strange sport; but one of the Queen's ladies was kept at home by a headache, and one of the King's attendants returned home after he had ridden a short way into the park. But no one noticed the absence of these two in the day's sport, and Cecily and Cazalla met in the palace garden to talk over their dangerous secret without fear of interruption.

'Cecily, I have lived in a dream since yesterday,' said the Count.

'And I have had a dreadful headache; for I thought you had gone out of your mind,' said Cecily, as she turned to walk with her companion to a summer-house close by.

He led Cecily to a seat, but before sitting down himself he went outside to look all round, and make sure that no listeners were near. 'I cannot be too careful—too cautious,' he said when he came back; 'I have felt almost afraid to trust my secret to you, Cecily, it is such a dangerous one: and nothing but

the betrayal of your own—that you, too, are a heretic—could have given me the courage to entrust it even to my betrothed wife.’

‘Not betrothed yet,’ said Cecily with a smile.

‘In heart and faith we are united, and you will promise to be my wife before you leave me to-day.’

Cecily did not say she would not. She was so amazed to hear that Cazalla was one in faith with herself that she was eager now to hear where he could have learned these Reformed doctrines.

‘Cecily, I could smile, sometimes, if I did not tremble with fear every time I think of it—to see the pains our Spanish friars are at to put down Lutheranism and every form of heresy abroad, while at home, in the very heart of Spain, they are making such progress that very soon, I believe, the number of the Reformed will at least equal, if they do not outnumber, those of the Orthodox.’

‘Is it possible—in Spain, where I have heard the Inquisition hunts down heresy, and does such dreadful things?’

‘Yes; at the very doors of the Inquisition these truths are being learned and the Bible read, but so secretly that none of the authorities know of it, or the secret dungeons of the Holy Office would be filled. There is a Reformed Church at Valladolid, of which my uncle, Pedro de Cazalla, one of the most eloquent men in Spain, is the pastor. The Church meets in the house of my grandame, a noble lady of the city, who is thought to be above suspicion, and, therefore, the secret is more safe.’

‘But how did you first learn these Reformed

doctrines? How did this new learning reach your jealously Catholic Spain?’

‘Well, Cecily, as to Spain being jealously Catholic, if the truth were known it never has been wholly Catholic, for in Aragon the Albigenses always found a refuge and noble patrons, and made many converts, too. It is a fact that Spain refused to adopt the Roman ritual long after it had been received by all other European countries; so that it will not be strange if she should lead the way in this Protestant Reformation, as she does in all other things.’

‘It may be as you say; Spain is a great nation, the mightiest of Europe, but—but no one ever thinks of her but as cruel and despotic, and wholly Catholic,’ said Cecily.

Cazalla smiled: ‘I know your English hatred and contempt for all foreigners,’ he said. ‘I know the common people believe we are so nearly allied to the devil that we all have tails and hoofs; but you, Cecily—you are not so bigoted?’

‘I don’t believe in the tail, of course, but I had never thought of Spain as the home, the refuge, of Protestantism and this new learning. But you have not told me now how *you* learned these truths. Were you educated in the Protestant faith? You say all your family are Protestant.’

‘And they are; but we were all brought up in the Romish Church, for it was not until a few years ago that these doctrines, or the Holy Scriptures, were heard of in Spain.’

‘Some of your countrymen had heard of Luther, I suppose,’ said Cecily, who was impatient to hear how Cazalla had learned this truth.

‘Yes ; we heard of Luther, and thought of him as your people do of us—that he had a tail and smelt of sulphur,’ laughed Cazalla.

‘Oh yes, of course, but you learned of him?’

‘Well, I think the first teacher Spain had was one of her own sons. Rodrigo de Valer was a noble, a fashionable, wild young man, who suddenly disappeared from Seville society for some months, and when he came back it was not to be the leader of tilts and tournaments, but to reprove the monks and priests for their evil lives, and to teach the people what he himself had, from the study of the New Testament, learned in his retirement. He had no human teacher, but he learned the truth of justification by faith, and taught it as clearly and boldly as any reformer.’

‘How very wonderful!’ exclaimed Cecily. ‘Surely God must have purposes of mercy even for Spain!’

Her friend smiled. ‘Dear Mistress Cecily, I have learned to believe that God loves all nations,’ he said. ‘I suppose we each think God has a special favour toward our own land ; but He is not Spanish, or French, or English, and He will give every nation the opportunity of sharing in the wonderful gift He is bestowing upon the world, that all who reject it may be without excuse ; and, more than this, as proof that this thing is of Him, and no mere device, He has Himself taught different men in different nations the same truth from the same source, the fountain of His Holy Word. I have heard that Luther and Zwinglius each learned in this way the wonderful truths they taught, and with our own grandee, Valer, it was the same.’

‘But is it not strange that we never heard of this Spanish Reformer?’ asked Cecily. ‘We know and honour Luther, and Zwinglius, and the French Reformers, Farel and Calvin, and the Italians, Ochino and Martyr. Is it not strange that we should not hear of your Senor Valer?’

‘Alas! no, Cecily. You forget that Spain is the land of the Inquisition. Valer was thought at first to be mad, and he was warned; then he was arrested, and conveyed to the secret prisons of the Inquisition: but, strange to say, some of the inquisitors themselves were among his disciples, and by their influence with the others he escaped for that time with only the loss of his property, and the shame that ever attaches to the name of “heretic” in Spain.’

‘And this silenced Valer?’ asked Cecily.

‘Would it silence an Englishman?’ asked Cazalla, archly. ‘I tell you, Mistress Cecily, there are brave and noble Spaniards, although your nation is slow to believe any good of us. Believe me, we are not a nation of Don Philips. There are a few Valers among us still, and when I tell you that he went straight from the tribunal of the Inquisition and taught again the very truths they had condemned, you will not charge him with being less bold than Luther himself.’

‘And he did that?’ exclaimed Cecily.

‘Yes; and was again arrested, not to escape this time. A fate worse than death to one of his bold, brave, free spirit now awaited him. They could not burn him, for his birth and lineage were too high and noble; but he was soon condemned to perpetual im-

prisonment, and as a warning to others used to be taken to the cathedral church of Seville to perform penance, at the festivals of the Church. But this was not continued long, for, after the sermon, instead of professing his penitence and abjuring the doctrines he had taught, he boldly told the people not to believe a word of the lying doctrine they had heard from the preacher, but to study God's Word for themselves, and see whether the teaching and practice of the Church agreed with the commands of God.'

Cecily's eyes were full of tears as she listened. 'I will try to think of your noble Valer sometimes when I hear any saying hard things of your nation,' she said.

'Thank you. Our Valer is little known on earth, but he is one of the "noble army of martyrs," enrolled from all nations, that now stand praising God.'

'He is dead, then?' said Cecily.

'Yes, thank God! or, rather, he has passed from his living death in the monastery dungeon to his true life, beyond the power of the Inquisition. His bold addresses to the people when brought out to do penance soon earned for him a more rigorous confinement, and he was sent to a distant prison, which he was never allowed to leave, until death released him, about ten years ago.'

'And you learned the truth from this noble countryman of yours?' asked Cecily.

'No, not from Valer, for few living beyond the neighbourhood of Seville ever heard him. I learned it from my Uncle Pedro, one of the Emperor's chaplains, a most learned and eloquent man, who

has travelled in many countries, to dispute with heretics and refute their doctrines. To do this he had to study the writings of the Reformers and compare them with the Scriptures, and in doing so became convinced of their truth, and returned to Spain to teach the truths he had sought to confound. In this he has been greatly aided by one of the most powerful grandees of Spain, Don de Seso, who is himself a learned and most earnest Christian man.'

'And is it not dangerous to teach these things in Spain now?' asked Cecily.

'Yes, indeed, it is most dangerous; and if our friar here, Soto, were only to see me talking to you, and discovered that you were a heretic, it might involve all my family, and half Valladolid, in ruin.'

'Then why, oh why, do you expose them to such a risk?' exclaimed Cecily, starting from her seat as she spoke. 'It is well known here that I am a heretic—that neither Master Underhill nor I ever go to mass. You must not, shall not, speak to me again,' she said.

But Cazalla would not allow her to pass out of the summer-house.

'Cecily, you are more brave than I am, for I fear to rouse suspicion against my friends by absenting myself. Will you not teach me—help me to do what is right—in spite of the consequences?'

Cecily shook her head. 'I don't know what you ought to do. Your friars, Soto and Garcia, who have come to confront us English heretics—will they learn of us, think you?' she asked.

Her friend shook his head. 'God only can tell.

Soto I fear more even than Carranza, who urges that no mercy, no quarter, should be shown to heretics ; for Soto betrayed his own friend, Egithius, into the hands of the Inquisition when he found that he had been a follower of Valer. I do fear Soto,' added the Count, with a sigh.

'Then I will not see you, will not speak to you again, for I cannot bear to think that you are in danger—and your friends,' added Cecily.

'You will give me the promise I ask, then, to-day—now, while this rare opportunity lasts ; and then I will promise not to seek you more than I shall the other ladies of the court,' said Cazalla ; and he drew Cecily down upon the seat again, and begged and pleaded, using all the arguments he could think of, until at last her promise was gained, and she consented to a secret marriage as soon as she could withdraw from the service of the Queen. Of course the engagement was to be a secret, and their manner to each other would have to be extremely guarded, all which—the secrecy and the caution—was extremely irksome to Cecily ; but she dare not ask to withdraw from her post until the important question concerning the disposal of the abbey lands was settled by Parliament.

The comparative quiet of Richmond was soon left behind, and Cecily once more formed part of the triumphal procession that entered London. As usual, there were all sorts of quaint devices and pageants erected by the citizens ; and the gibbets with their hanging skeletons had been taken down, as well as the heads of Wyatt and his followers, from London Bridge. But although everything that

could offend the sight had been taken out of the way, and the sun shone as bright this August day as it had done twelve months before, Cecily could see and hear that the welcome given to the Queen now was not as hearty as when she first entered her capital. There were many sad and gloomy faces among the crowd, and not a few openly scowled at King Philip. Then there was confusion in the shouts, for some cried, 'Long live Mary and Philip!' while but few would raise the orthodox cry, 'Long live Philip and Mary!'

But if the citizens were not altogether pleased with the Queen, she was greatly displeased with them before she reached Suffolk Place, where she was to stay that night. One of the pageants was a representation of the nine worthies, and King Henry VIII. holding an open book in his hand toward the Queen, inscribed, '*Verbum Dei*'—'God's Word.'

Mary and Philip were both greatly displeased, and, to prevent this heretical pageant from doing any further mischief, a painter was sent for instantly to efface the obnoxious book, and so hastily was his work done that half the hand holding it was painted out, too.

Of course there was a great deal of laughing and jesting about this afterward among the ladies and gentlemen of the court, and Cazalla contrived to whisper to Cecily, 'Your citizens seem determined to hold fast by the Scriptures.'

'Many of them are true Gospellers, and will do so; but I fear that when it comes to the Parliament, and many find the land or the Bible must go, they will hold fast to the land.'



A PAINTER WAS SENT FOR INSTANTLY TO REPLACE THE OBSCURE BOOK.—See page 223.

‘We shall see, we shall see. You will leave the court as soon as this land question is settled?’ said Cazalla anxiously.

‘I would leave at once, if it were possible, for I am needed at home. I have just received letters from my father’s steward, who tells me that the crops are rotting in the fields from the constant wet we have had lately, and there is so much distress among the poor. Yes, I will leave as soon as I can. Have you heard when the Council meets?’

‘In a few weeks, I believe, and this question of restoring the abbey lands to the Church will then be brought forward. But see: Soto has entered the gallery; I must say farewell;’ and Cazalla bowed in his most courteous and stately fashion, and went at once to speak to the holy father.

Cecily turned away, sick at heart. She was so weary of the rounds of gaieties and endless festivities, and longed to be at rest somewhere. At rest! but where could rest be found? Not in England now, for everybody lived in fear of what the morrow might bring them; for scarcely a day passed but some one was haled off to prison for the crime of reading God’s Word, or teaching children the Lord’s Prayer in English.

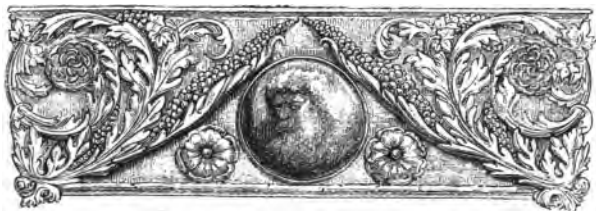
Cecily often wondered what the fate of the imprisoned bishops would be, for Hooper was still in his miserable dungeon in the Fleet, and Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer at Oxford. Although they had been condemned to be burned, no one had thought the sentence would be carried into execution, and this long imprisonment seemed to give many the hope that the Queen would eventually pardon

them, especially Hooper, who had from the first espoused her cause.

Soon after the court arrived at Whitehall the Duke of Norfolk died, which put an end to further merry-making just now, for the court went into mourning, and the Queen retired, with one or two of her ladies, to Hampton Court.

Cecily obtained leave to withdraw for this season in order to attend to her father's affairs in the country, and it was with a thankful heart she turned her back once more on her palace-home, and went to visit her friends at the Aldgate parsonage.





CHAPTER XXI.

WAS IT WITCHCRAFT ?

CECILY had not been many hours at the Aldgate parsonage, where she purposed spending a few days, before Dame Gillian found an opportunity of airing her latest and greatest grievance—her young mistress' betrothal to a Spaniard. Cecily knew she could trust her old nurse with her secret, and it had been some relief to tell her; but the old woman had found it hard work to keep it, and as soon as she found Mildred alone she unburdened her mind of the weight that oppressed her.

'Dame Scrope, I had it in my mind more than once to go to the Queen herself, and ask her to stop the foolish child from throwing herself away on an outlandish foreigner, who, they do say—and I believe it, too—has got a tail tucked out of sight somewhere. I've tried to get a look at his feet, too, but I never could,' added the old woman in a mysterious whisper.

Mildred could not help smiling at this, in spite of the astonishment she felt, and she did feel greatly astonished, and alarmed, too. 'Does your mistress go to mass now?' she asked, rather anxiously.

‘What has that to do with this horrible marriage?’ snapped the old woman. ‘Religion seems to be everything nowadays. If a man is only a Protestant, it don’t matter whether he’s a Frenchman or any other outlandish stranger.’

Mildred smiled at the old woman’s anger. ‘I know you hate all strangers,’ she said; ‘but we are greatly indebted to them for much that we have learned; and our late King invited many French, German, and Italian scholars to teach in our Universities because they were Protestants, but I never heard of Spanish Protestants.’

‘Of course not; they are all rogues and thieves, come over to rob us of everything, even our sweetest ladies, and not even my dear young mistress could escape them. I believe this Count has bewitched her. It must be witchcraft and nothing else, or she would never like an outlandish stranger when she might have an honest Englishman,’ concluded Gillian.

Mildred did not know what to think. It might be, as the old woman said, that Cecily had fallen under the spells of witchcraft to give up her faith. All Spaniards, she had heard, had dealings with the evil one, and what more natural—all other means of inducing her to go to mass having failed—than that this gentleman of King Philip should weave his spells about one of the Queen’s ladies, in order to draw her into this idolatrous worship? It troubled Mildred greatly, but she could not speak to Cecily about it at once, for she had begged to be left undisturbed while she wrote letters to her father, Lady Cecil, and some other friends.

Turning over every probable and improbable solution of the mystery, the only one at all feasible to her mind was the one suggested by old Gillian—Cecily was really and truly bewitched; and then arose the question whether it would not be better to inform against this Spaniard at once, before the marriage took place. In her perplexity she sent for her friend, Dame Hartipol, and talked to her, and it was agreed that they should both go and talk to Cecily, and it might be they could by that means ascertain whether or not she was under the influence of magical spells.

Cecily, who had just finished writing a long letter to her father, informing him of her projected marriage and asking his consent, and also appealing to him to give up Edendale Priory and retire with her and Cazalla to his estate in Spain, was somewhat surprised to see Mildred and Dame Hartipol enter the room looking so anxious.

‘What is it? What has happened?’ asked Cecily in some alarm.

‘We don’t quite know yet, Mistress Cecily; don’t look so frightened,’ said Dame Hartipol, taking her hand and giving Mildred some mysterious nods.

‘There is some dreadful news to tell me, I know—something has happened at court;’ and Cecily flew to the window, expecting to see messengers at the door. She was greatly agitated, which only confirmed her friends’ suspicions about her, and they treated her as though she were insane. At last, after various attempts to soothe and calm her, which in turn amused, puzzled, and irritated Cecily,

Dame Hartipol said: 'You go to mass now, Mistress Cecily. Will you come with me to-morrow?'

'Who told you I go to mass?' asked Cecily.

'Well, your old nurse, Gillian, has been talking to Dame Scrope.'

'Gillian! Oh, I know what you mean, now,' exclaimed Cecily, breaking into a merry laugh; 'she has told you I am betrothed to one of the King's gentlemen—Count Cazalla.'

'And it is true, Cecily?' asked Mildred.

'Yes; quite true,' said Cecily, who thought she would have some fun now.

'But he is a Spaniard,' said Dame Hartipol.

'And you believe in their tails? Well, I have not seen it, but am assured it is quite harmless where it exists,' said Cecily.

'But, Cecily, how could you like—?'

'A man with a tail—to say nothing of his feet,' interrupted Cecily. 'Well, the Count is a most noble, generous, chivalrous knight, and they are not so common in these days that one need to quibble about—a tail.'

Mildred began to see now that Cecily was joking, and she said, 'Well, whether he has a tail or not, I am very sorry, very deeply grieved, to hear of this marriage; for, of course, he is a Catholic, and will compel you to go to mass with him.'

'No; he will not. Mildred, I am almost afraid to trust our secret even to you and Dame Hartipol, it is so dangerous; but Count Cazalla and all his family are Protestant, and there are many others in Spain, although it is not known to the authorities.'

'A Spaniard and a Protestant!' exclaimed both her friends in a breath.

'Are you sure he is not deceiving you, Mistress Cecily? that he is not one of the servants of the Inquisition?' said Dame Hartipol suspiciously.

'If you knew Count Cazalla as I do you would know it was impossible,' said Cecily proudly.

But Mildred shook her head. 'I greatly fear we shall have the Inquisition set up among us, and who can tell but this Count Cazalla has been sent to do it?'

Cecily looked half offended. 'You will, I trust, see the Count to-night or to-morrow. He has promised to visit me here before I journey into the country.'

'A Spaniard come here! O Cecily, you have betrayed us!' exclaimed Mildred.

'Betrayed you? Why, Mildred, Count Cazalla has more reason to fear you, now that I have told you our secret, than you have to fear him. Besides, what harm can he do you? I have told him nothing of Martin, and he is safe at Oxford still; and you are only known as the Queen's embroiderers. One of the servants will direct him here about this same business of embroidery, for he is anxious for some of our English handicraft.'

But Mildred looked only still half satisfied. 'I would the Queen had chosen to wed with the young Earl of Devon, and these Spaniards had never been heard of,' she said.

'I, too, wish King Philip had never set foot in England,' said Cecily; 'but we do his nation wrong in thinking they are all brutish, evil-minded men,

given over by God to the devil. There have been good and noble men in Spain who have laid down their life for the truth of the Gospel.' And then Cecily told the story of Rodrigo de Valer.

She succeeded at last in convincing her anxious friends that she was not under the spells of witchcraft, but they could only shake their heads dubiously over her proposed marriage.

The next day Count Cazalla paid his promised visit, but his stately, haughty Spanish manners were a fresh offence to Mildred. She consented, however, to do the embroidery he required—some work which would involve rather frequent visits, she found, which was another cause of displeasure, although she took care to conceal it from Cecily.

The journey to Edendale had been postponed that Cecily might write her letters and despatch them through her friend, Sir William Cecil, before she left London; but the very day fixed for her departure she was seized with another attack of ague. This complaint was very common in those days, and often proved fatal, and Count Cazalla was exceedingly anxious. It was this anxiety that first induced Mildred to view him with any liking. All that kind thoughtfulness could suggest did he do for Cecily, and often brought the two children wonderful and costly toys that they might not make a noise to disturb her.

Lady Cecil came to visit her, as well as Mistress Jane Dormer, the Queen's favourite maid, who suggested archly that it would be better for Cecily to go to Spain for a season, as she would not be able to return to her duties at court for some time.

It was some weeks before Cecily was able to leave her bed, but as soon as she was well enough she sat up to receive a visit from Count Cazalla, who sent word to her that the Council had met and he had some important news to tell her.

As soon as the first greetings were over Cecily said, 'You bring me news about this land question?'

'Yes, indeed, I do;' and the Count smiled.

'Is it settled?' asked Cecily.

'Yes; I think my lord of Bedford has convinced the Queen, in his rough English fashion, that, whatever else they may yield, it will not be the abbey lands.'

'Tell me all that passed. Were you present?'

'Yes; for I was anxious to see how your carping English nobles behaved in their solemn Council; and—but O Cecily, one nation never will understand another, I fear, for my lord of Bedford played the part of a passionate schoolboy who is threatened with the loss of a meal.'

'Why, what did he do?'

'Well, the Queen was present, and one spoke of the fatherly counsel that had come from Rome concerning the restoration of the Church lands when the Earl of Bedford rose from his seat, snatched the rosary of beads from his girdle, and threw them into the fire, exclaiming, with an oath, "I value my sweet abbey of Woburn more than any fatherly counsel that can come from Rome!"'

'I quite believe it,' said Cecily, with a smile.

'No one can doubt it. But, Cecily, if they keep the lands they must yield something in return. You know that this much-talked-of Cardinal Pole

is coming as the Pope's legate, to reconcile the kingdom to his Holiness, and is expected to reach England this present month of November.'

'Yes; I have heard it whispered that the Pope will be made head of the English Church again, but I am not so sure that the people will agree to it.'

'The people! But will they be asked? Many of those sitting in Parliament hold these abbey lands, and they will be suffered to hold them—for a time, at least—as the price of their compliance with other changes the King and Queen may wish to make.'

'You mean the re-establishment of the Pope's supremacy. I know the Queen does not like this new prerogative of sovereignty—this being the head of the Church.'

'And Carranza, King Philip's confessor, is by no means satisfied with the existing laws against heresy, and the new Parliament about to meet will be asked to pass more rigorous measures.'

'What! more rigorous than that detestable Act of Six Articles!' exclaimed Cecily.

'You forget, I am a stranger, and know little about your laws; but I know what is talked of in the King's chamber—that nothing but extreme measures will root out this heresy; that laws must be passed more severe than any that now exist; and that the principles of our own infamous Holy Office must be slowly and carefully introduced into every parish.'

'But, Pedro, King Philip is not *our* king? Englishmen will never allow your Inquisition to be set up here,' exclaimed Cecily passionately.

‘They will not know it. Instructions are to be issued to every parish priest to look out two or more discreet persons who shall inform themselves, and acquaint him, with the manners and behaviour of every family under his charge. No one will call this secret spying “the Inquisition;” but it comes to the same thing, for instructions are also to be sent to the governors of prisons to make use of torture to make their victims disclose their guilt.’

‘But, Pedro, this never will be allowed in England,’ said Cecily. *Queen Mary* is our ruler.’

‘With King Philip to aid her,’ put in Cazalla; ‘and that “aid” is the ordering of what she shall do.’

‘But you forget that the Queen cannot do just as she likes, or even as her husband commands her, in matters of State. She must be guided by her Council and Parliament. You yourself know how anxious she is to have the abbey lands restored to the Church—that she fully intends to give up all that belong to the crown—but she cannot force the Council and Parliament to do this against their wish.’

‘No; and in this question I can see their strength and their weakness, too. The Queen wants the lands and new laws, too. She cannot get both; but her Parliament will not dare to refuse both, and so there will be a tacit bargain between the two. They will be suffered to hold their possessions in peace if they pass laws which the Queen desires, and then—’

‘What?’ asked Cecily anxiously.

But Cazalla hid his face. ‘God pity this poor

land when Philip and Carranza have their way! Cecily, it will be no place for you,' he said, when he raised his head. 'I must take you to a place of safety before long.'

'But I cannot, will not, believe that our English Parliament will ever pass such laws as you say the King desires. You do not understand this Reformation of ours. It was not brought about merely by King Henry's rejection of the supremacy of the Pope. The people have learned the difference between the Romish and Protestant faith, and, having had the Bible open to them for many years, now they have chosen the Protestant faith intelligently for themselves.'

'I do not doubt what would be—what is—the choice of the people; and if the passing of these new laws rested with them they never would be passed. But it is not the people who have the choice. There is a picked House of Commons, where Spanish gold has been spent freely, and an Upper House, calling itself Protestant—because it is convenient, seeing that most of them hold abbey lands—but caring nothing for any religion so that they may retain their possessions. These will do the Queen's bidding, or the King's, either, and their great care will be to root out this heresy by the burning of heretics.'

'They will never do it. Have you not heard the saying, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"?' "

'Yes; and I have read, too, that, when persecuted in one place, we are bidden to fly to another, and, therefore, we must take some measures to secure

our safety while there is time; for when once this fierce persecution begins they will give us small chance of escape.'

'O Pedro, I cannot think the Queen will be so cruel,' persisted Cecily.

'The Queen! But you forget the power behind—Philip and his confessor. Have you received the letters from your father yet? Will he give me the right to protect you from the coming storm?' asked the Count anxiously.

'Yes; the packet came by a messenger from Lady Cecil yesterday, and—and he agrees to everything I wish but to give up the land. He will not ask me to give up my faith, he says, because he has never forgotten a conversation we once had about it, and he is sure I could not believe in the Romish doctrines again; but he thinks I had better leave England and join him in France, as Cardinal Pole is about to return, and the kingdom to be reconciled to the Pope.'

'Your father is at least sensible, Cecily, and now, when will you give me the right to protect and shield you from all this coming trouble? As the Countess Cazalla you might be able to help some of your friends to escape.'

'Yes, yes; Mildred and Martin Scrope must come with me. But have you ever thought of this, Pedro—who could marry us?'

It was a difficulty neither of them had foreseen, and Cazalla had to leave at last without having discovered any way out of it; but charging Cecily to think of some plan for a secret marriage before he came again.



CHAPTER XXII.

CONCLUSION.

TWO men were travelling along the same flat stretch of road to which our readers were introduced in the opening chapter of this story, but the landscape looked bare and desolate in the wintry sunshine of that February day. They both wore leather jerkins and the coarse clothes of farm servants, but the taller of the two wore his hat slouched over his face, and his head drooped, so that it was not easy for any chance passenger to see his countenance.

As they drew near the manor-house Master Audley appeared at the gate, and then one of the men said in a loud tone, 'Sir, have you got a job of work you can give a poor knave I've just picked up on the road? This is our master I was telling you about,' he said, turning to his companion, 'and yonder 's our parish priest, good Father Ambrose.'

The traveller bent in lowly reverence to the priest as he passed, but contrived to keep his face concealed, while Master Audley and the priest exchanged distant courtesies.

'What can the knave do?' asked Master

Audley ; 'there isn't much work going now, and in these hard times, what with bad harvests and—' But there was no need to proceed further with the grumbling, for the priest was beyond hearing, and there was no one else to be seen ; and in a very different tone Master Audley said fervently, 'God bless you, Hodge Watkins !—God for ever bless you for this day's work !' and he would have grasped a hand of each, but Hodge whispered cautiously ; 'Don't spoil it, master. The work isn't done yet, and some one may be about. You go on, and let Master Scrope follow behind, and don't turn to speak to him until you get indoors.' Then, turning to his fellow traveller, he said, for the benefit of any chance eavesdropper, 'Well, now, you'd better take the offer—a good meal, and a night's rest in the barn, with plenty of clean straw, is not to be despised ;' and then, with a parting nod, he hurried toward the Priory.

To send for Dame Gillian and ask to see Mistress Cecily was the work of a very few minutes ; but the old woman felt aggrieved at the secret conferences that had already been held between her young mistress and this farm servant, and she told him abruptly that her lady should not be disturbed. But she had hardly spoken the words when Cecily's maid came tripping down the stairs with an order from her mistress to take Hodge to her at once.

When the maid opened the door Cecily came hastily forward to meet her awkward and abashed visitor. 'O Hodge, tell me quickly, is he safe ?' she asked.

'Ay, Mistress Cecily, safe enough in Master Audley's hall,' whispered Hodge.

'Thank God ! O Hodge, how can I reward you for this service ?'

'I wouldn't take anything, Mistress Cecily ; for this is just the proudest day of my life. It's what I've been longing for and waiting for all these six years. I thought it had come when King Edward died, and I went to London ; but it's come to-day, and I can let you know that an Englishman, if he is poor, isn't ungrateful.'

'I never thought to ask you to do me such a service as this, and you a Catholic ?'

'Mistress Cecily, I was a Catholic when you saved me and my mother, and Master Audley, who was a Protestant as well as you, was always a kind friend to us. Of course, I like the old religion, but I don't like these burnings that I've heard about—four good men burned in one week ; and Hooper—the Bishop of Gloucester—declared for Queen Mary, and helped her, too, they say, when the people were throwing caps for Queen Jane in London. No, no ; I don't like these burnings ; but it makes me wonder, more and more, what there can be in this new religion, that men will die rather than give it up ; for a man told me that the Queen's pardon was offered to each of them if they would only recant and go to mass.'

'O Hodge, if you only knew the difference there is between the old faith and the new,' exclaimed Cecily, 'you would not wonder that men preferred to die rather than give it up.'

'Well, Mistress Cecily, I do believe there must

be a difference, as you say. I used to think it was all the land, for you see them that got the Church lands always called themselves Protestants.'

'Yes, yes; I know,' said Cecily, turning aside her shame-stricken face.

'Of course I thought that when the Queen altered the religion of the country again they'd go with the tide, as many of them have; but there's many more that hasn't, and why the Queen can't treat them as King Edward did us—just leave them alone—is more than I can tell.'

'I—I don't think the Queen is so much to blame, Hodge, as many suppose. It is the King and Gardiner and Bonner.'

'Well, now, that's another thing. They say the priests are afraid of this new learning, because they'll never get money for masses for the dead and absolution, and that's why the Bibles are taken out of the churches. I wish now I'd gone to hear Master Rupert read it sometimes. I'd like to know what there can be in it that Master Bonner is afraid of it, and burns them that understand most about it; for you see they are all learned men that he's got rid of.'

'They have taken poor men as well, Hodge, although none of them have been burned yet. But Bishop Bonner hopes, by taking those who are well known, to frighten others into giving up these new opinions, or never learning them.'

Hodge shook his head. 'Of course, I can't pretend to know anything about it, but it seems a mistake—that way does. You know how long the Bible stood in our church, and I could have heard

it read any day, but I never wanted to go. It didn't seem to concern me; but since I've heard about Protestants being clapped into prison for saying their prayers in English, and good men, that nobody finds fault with except that they don't go to mass, burned—well, I want to know what there is in the Bible that the priests are afraid to let us see it; and, please God, I'll know soon, too, if I can find out where there is a Bible.'

'That's right, Hodge. Hear what the word of God says about absolution, and masses for the dead, and prayers to the Virgin, and praying to a piece of bread. Master Audley will have a Bible of his own soon, and he will read it to you, never fear. But now, tell me, how are we to get into the church to-night? Count Cazalla will be here about midnight, and Dame Scrope will be with him; but how are we to get into church?'

'I will get the key from Father Ambrose, never fear.'

'But, Hodge, you must be careful that there are no watchers about to see the light in the church.'

'You may trust me, Mistress Cecily; but there is nothing to fear, for if the light was seen the knaves would all be too frightened to come near. No, no; there have been too many ghost stories talked about lately for anybody to come near the Priory or the church. Father Ambrose has talked about it so much that he half believes it himself now; but in case he should be abroad and venture near I'll have a ghost in readiness for him;' and Hodge rubbed his hands and chuckled with glee at

the thought of playing 'ghost' to the originator of the tales.

This had been the proudest, happiest day of his life, and when Cecily finally dismissed him, saying she must trust all the arrangements to him, he would not have given up the honour even for his old position of reeve.

Cecily paced the room for an hour after he had left her, thinking of his faithful service, of the noble, manly nature that, in spite of creed and priestly control, asserted itself in Hodge Watkins; and she thought with bitterness of those who, noble by name, but basely ignoble by nature, had sold the lives and liberties of their fellow men for Philip's Spanish gold and the abbey lands. But Cecily grew calmer as the time went on, for Hodge's curiosity to read the Bible inspired her with the hope that others, too, like him, would have their thoughts turned toward this subject, and examine into the cause of the bitter hatred and persecution organised against the Reformed faith.

And yet why should she hope this, she asked herself with a sigh—what hope was there for the English Reformation? The Pope was again the head of the Church, and had sent Cardinal Pole as his legate, to reconcile the kingdom on its promising to abjure heresy; and all too willingly had the Parliament passed laws that would commit hundreds to prison and the stake; and not even the Queen's death would release them from this thralldom now, for there was small hope that the Princess Elizabeth would ever succeed her sister, now that an heir was expected, and King Philip appointed

guardian of the kingdom in case of the Queen's death. No, no; it was useless to hope for the English Reformation any longer. Those who could escape from England must do so, as she and Martin and Mildred Scrope were going to do.

She had never thought it would be necessary for her to do this. She had fancied her father would have influence enough to protect her; but she was afraid to trust to this now. Then she thought of her father, now growing old and worn, and the disappointment he would feel at her leaving England just as he was about to return and settle down to spend the evening of his days in the retirement of Edendale. Then she thought of his possessions here—the Church lands that had been a constant source of anxiety and trouble to him ever since he had held them. True, he had more right to them than many, for they were given in payment of a just and lawful debt; but they had brought nothing but trouble, and had been the means of changing her father from the bluff, good-natured soldier to the hard, relentless landlord; for he fancied that everybody owed him a grudge for holding the land, and servants and neighbours were alike treated as enemies.

But Cecily could not spare all her time for these meditations. She was to be married to Count Cazalla at midnight in the parish church, and Martin Scrope was to perform the ceremony after the manner of the Reformed Church. Cazalla would return to London again immediately, for he had obtained the King's permission to go back to Spain, as the English climate had seriously affected

his health, and a ship was already awaiting him in the Thames. He was to embark the next day, and, wind and weather permitting, would reach Harwich the day following, where Cecily, with her maid, and Martin and Mildred Scrope, also, as her servants, would be in readiness to embark.

This was the plan of escape which, by the rather reluctant help of old Gillian, who did not like being left behind, the ready assistance of Master Audley, and the ready ingenuity of Hodge Watkins, was successfully carried out. There had to be a little care exercised in entering the marriage in the parish register, but fortunately Father Ambrose could neither read nor write himself, and so Master Audley had always to perform this duty for him; so that the only care necessary was not to occupy too much of the page, lest the old priest should remember just where the last entry stood.

Cecily thought of that other wedding, when she and Dame Gillian glided into the shadowy church like ghosts; and truly the bridegroom looked as unlike the Count Cazalla she knew in his court braveries as it was possible to imagine. He had donned the frock and cowl of a monk, for the double purpose of hiding his other dress and securing him from the cold. Mildred had ridden on a pillion behind him, and now stood near her husband, white, and trembling with excitement, cold, and the hard riding of the last few miles. She saw nothing, knew nothing, but that she was in her husband's arms once more, while the bride and bridegroom were alike oblivious of their surroundings, until Master Audley interrupted them by say-

ing, 'Come, come; everybody has promised to be sensible for a little while, and I can see Hodge has got his ghost in readiness.'

Then Martin took his place near the altar, and Count Cazalla led his bride forward, forgetting that this was not his part of the ceremony. In a deeply solemn and impressive voice Martin read the marriage service, and the little party gathered round to commemorate the undying love of that Saviour who had said, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'

When the ceremony was over, and the marriage duly entered in the register, the ghost-like party glided out into the darkness, and silently took their way to the manor-house, where Dame Audley had prepared a substantial meal for the travellers, not forgetting the hippocras customary at all weddings.

When the good dame had folded her daughter in her arms and shed a few tears over her, she led the way to an inner room where supper had been laid, whispering to Mildred as she went, 'Was ever such a strange wedding heard of, and Mistress Cecily a Countess; too! Well, well, strange times make strange doings! Mildred, I'm glad you and Martin are going away, but I'm more glad that you'll leave the children with me.'

'O mother, that's just the worst part of it, that I can't take the children with me,' said Mildred, bursting into tears.

'Yes, yes; it's hard, I know, my child, that you must be separated from either husband or children; but I'll take good care of them, never fear.'

‘I’m not afraid of that, mother ; but you must promise me one thing—never let them forget the English “Our Father.” You’ll let them say it every night and morning at your knee, and tell them about their mother and father across the sea.’

‘I will, I will, Mildred. But you’re not going yet, you know—not until to-morrow. We shall have one day more together—one day, but only one, and—and we may never see each other again.’ And poor Dame Audley could not restrain her grief any longer.

‘Hush, hush, mother ! you forget that we shall be parted but a little while after all ; for in heaven we shall meet, never to separate.’ But although Mildred tried to speak bravely and hopefully, her own tears choked her utterance ; and at that moment Martin drew her to the table, for her father was solemnly pledging the bride’s health in a bumper of hippocras, which was gravely responded to by the Count.

He could not linger long at his bridal feast, for by daylight he must be in London, to take his accustomed place in attendance on the King, and it was only by hard riding that he could hope to do it. Hodge had brought down one of the fleetest horses from the Priory, which now stood at the door, ready for him to mount.

Turning to Mildred as he went out, he said, ‘You will take care of Donna Cazella, and not fail me at Harwich,’ and, leading Cecily to the porch, he bade her farewell, and the next minute had mounted his horse and was riding toward London.

After a few hours’ rest Cecily began the com-

pletion of her preparations for her departure, Hodge would carry the luggage in a waggon carefully covered with hay, and this was to start at night, that he might reach Harwich by midday ; but the rest of the party would have to leave some hours earlier, and start from different points, in different disguises, not venturing to meet until they were beyond the neighbourhood where they were known.

It was an anxious time for everybody until Count Cazalla's vessel was hailed, and all were safe on board. Then Master Audley breathed a fervent 'Thank God !' though his heart was almost breaking over the departure of his daughter, whom he never expected to see again in this world.

Geneva was to be the future home of Mildred and her husband, for Cecily could not persuade them to go with her to her husband's home in Spain. They would not trust themselves in any kingdom where King Philip held sway, and Cecily, though she blamed them now, thought their decision a wise one a few months later ; for oh, Spain was not England—was as unlike her native land as anything could be imagined. Perhaps her disappointment was most bitter over the Protestant Church of Valladolid, over which her husband's uncle presided, and about which they had so often talked.

Cecily did not doubt the sincerity or earnestness of her fellow Christians here in Spain, but why they should so studiously hide their convictions and steal to their place of meeting, afraid almost of encountering each other in the street, was to her almost

inexplicable, and seemed like denying the Master they professed to love. She could see it was not so hard, not so difficult, for a Spaniard to do this; it was in accord with the grave, stately, reticent character of the whole people; but just because it was utterly unlike what Englishmen would do Cecily said many harsh things about it, and sometimes the domestic happiness was threatened through this trouble. Poor Cecily had learned much during life, but she had not learned the lesson of charity yet quite so well as she thought she had, and her husband saw, to his sorrow, that his dearly-loved English wife would never be happy in sunny Spain, but pined for her native fogs and mists, as he often laughingly told her.

In the early part of the year 1558 news reached Valladolid that in the English war against France Calais had been lost to the English, and that it was preying on the health of the Queen, who had been ailing for the last two years.

‘O Pedro, if the Queen were to die, would you take me back to England—back to my father?’ asked Cecily eagerly.

Count Cazalla looked at his wife, and saw how even this scrap of hope had moved her, and he said slowly, ‘Yes, my dear; if we might worship God after our own hearts, I would endure the fogs and wet for your sake.’

‘God bless you, Pedro! We shall go; I know we shall!’ she cried hysterically.

‘Mind, Cecily, not unless it is safe,’ said her husband.

‘Safe? There is no little heir to the throne, and

King Philip will not be the guardian of the Princess Elizabeth.'

'But you forget, this English Princess is a Romanist,' said Cazalla.

'Not from conviction, only from fear, and England will be Protestant again! O Pedro, I feel it, I know it; God will hear and answer the prayers of his martyred servants. You remember what is reported of Latimer when he was about to be burned with Bishop Ridley: "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, we shall this day, by God's grace, light in England such a candle as, I trust, shall never be put out."'

But weeks and months passed on, and all the news that came from England told of the persecution being carried on with unabated fury; but still Cecily hoped, and prayed, and believed in her speedy return to her native land.

At the close of the year came the tidings that Queen Elizabeth reigned in England in the place of her sister, who had just died. As soon as the news of Queen Mary's death reached them, Cecily was all impatience to pack up and prepare for their departure at once. It was not so easy, however, to persuade the Count that his estate could be left in the hands of a steward at a few hours' notice; so it was not until the spring of the year 1559 that they bade farewell to Valladolid and their Protestant friends there, and sailed for England.

'O Pedro, I can breathe freely now, for I shall never see one of these hideous, black-masked familiars of the Inquisition again. Oh, thank God, I am out of Spain!' said Cecily, as they stood on the deck of the vessel, and watched the fast-receding shore.

‘Why, Cecily, I did not know you were so terribly afraid of these men,’ said the Count.

‘Men!’ repeated Cecily; ‘well, yes, I suppose they are men; but their stealthy creeping, gliding about and meeting you just where you never expect them, has made me feel as though they were watchful evil spirits.’

‘And yet, Cecily, you blame us for our secrecy and caution in concealing our Protestant opinions,’ said her husband.

‘I blamed it, I suppose, because secrecy is so hateful to me,’ laughed Cecily; but the next moment she said, more seriously: ‘Pedro, do you not think, are you not afraid, that the Inquisition may be as secret as you in their proceedings to discover the heresy, if once they suspect it? Would it not be better for your friends to flee while they have the chance?’

Don Pedro shook his head: ‘There is nothing to fear, my Cecily,’ he said confidently; ‘and I have promised that we will return and visit them again next year.’

But Cecily shook her head. ‘Wait until next year comes,’ she said.

They reached Edendale to find that Mildred and her husband had returned just before them, and that Martin had been installed as the parish priest, at the earnest solicitation of Sir Peter Temple, just before he died. It was almost the last word the knight spoke. ‘Cecily would like it,’ he whispered; ‘Cecily and Martin Scrope must do the work I have left undone.’

The Countess Cazalla was overwhelmed with

grief when she heard of her father's death ; but she resolved to fulfil her father's wishes concerning the property.

Scarcely had they reached England, however, when the news followed them that the storm had burst upon the Protestant church of Spain. So secret had been the movements of the Inquisition that the devoted band of Christians had no word of warning—no chance of escape. Simultaneously arrests were made all over the kingdom. All the secret prisons of the Inquisition, and the common prisons, too, were filled with victims.

The following October came the news of a grand *auto-da-fê* that had been held in the presence of King Philip ; and most of the grandees of Spain were present to witness the burning of one of their own order, the first, but not the last, Spanish nobleman the Inquisition dared to doom to the stake. Don Seso, with twelve other Protestants, among whom was Pedro Cazalla, Cecily's husband's uncle, were burned at this *auto*, refusing to recant as firmly as any of their English brethren had done.

'O Pedro, and I doubted them !' said Cecily when she heard the awful news ; 'I dared to doubt the zeal and bravery of these martyred saints of God, who have gone to prison and to death rather than deny their Master.'

'Do not fret, my Cecily, for this ; I can hardly grieve even for my noble uncle ; but oh how sadly for Spain—poor, benighted Spain ! She is casting the Gospel from her now ; will it ever be offered her again ?'

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